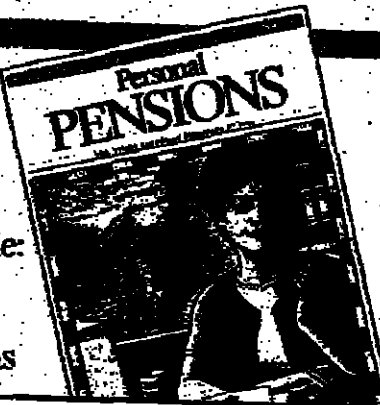
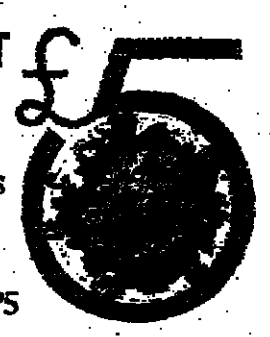


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Voucher, P5



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Sting in the Clinton tale
Peter Stothard on the inside story of the President's rise in WEEKEND



Original sinner
Ginny Dougarty meets Martin Scorsese
MAGAZINE, PAGE 8

Police raid 30 houses

£1m reward in hunt for IRA bombers

By STEWART TENDLER AND RICHARD FORD

A MILLION-POUND reward for the capture of the Docklands bombers was offered by Scotland Yard yesterday as hundreds of armed police raided more than 30 addresses in the hunt for the IRA terrorists.

John Grieve, head of the Anti-Terrorist Branch, said the reward was being offered by "members of the community" and he hoped that it would tempt people in the underworld to come forward with information.

Hundreds of extra officers had earlier been called up to search some 20 houses in London and another dozen in Kent, Essex and the Midlands. A number of people were being questioned, although none was arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism legislation. A number of items were seized, but police would not say if they included weapons.

Announcing the reward yesterday, Mr Grieve said that the money would be paid either to individuals or a group whose information led to convictions. "We will use every weapon we are given by our communities to bring terrorists to justice. We know some criminals are motivated by money and we can all use that to get the information we need," he said.

Police believe that the IRA has been using sympathisers or activists who are also on the fringes of the criminal world to prepare the new mainland

campaign. They may have helped in building the bomb and supplied parts or helped to assemble the Ford Cargo lorry used to plant the device at South Quay last Friday.

Detectives have now pieced together some of the movements of the blue flat-backed lorry, which arrived on the Larnie to Stranraer ferry last Wednesday night — although big gaps remain, suggesting that it may have been hidden somewhere.

The lorry was carrying a red trailer with the Irish registration S157 BL, which had been taken from another Ford Cargo lorry which had been broken up. The trailer would have made the low-loader less conspicuous to anyone watching the traffic coming off the ferry. They would have thought the English registered lorry was bringing back a cargo bought somewhere in Ireland.

The lorry passed through Carlisle on its journey south, but then vanished until 8 am on Friday, when it was seen at South Mimms, the service area and junction between the M25 and the M1 in Hertfordshire. The IRA has used this service area before for meetings and to park vehicles for active service units.

After the stop at South Mimms, the lorry vanished again, but police are sure it was driven to another place and then moved one more. By the afternoon it was parked on waste ground in a lane at the bottom of River Road in

Barking, east London. The road is lined with industrial sites, warehouses and lorry parks. The lane is a dead end surrounded by lorry companies, a building firm and a crane company.

Yesterday one worker at a nearby firm said that the lorry was parked before lunchtime at a spot regularly used by drivers resting or waiting for one of the many yards and factories in the road to open. Lorries and trailers constantly go by, which means the low loader passed with little notice. The spot could only have been chosen by someone who knew that the bombers could work without interference.

At 4 pm, the trailer was taken off the lorry and abandoned. The bomb built into the back of the lorry was armed and the vehicle disappeared westwards towards Docklands. Over the weekend the trailer lay unnoticed on waste ground until local workers called the police on Monday.

Yesterday teams of officers questioned all drivers going in and out of River Road to see if they remembered anything about the lorry.

Scotland Yard also confirmed that they have investigated a postcard sent to two prisoners at Camp Hill prison on the Isle of Wight on January 9. The card, from an IRA sympathiser who had served at the prison, bore a picture of Canary Wharf on one side and the words "Bang Bang" on the other.



Lucien Lawrence, 8, following the coffin of his father, Philip Lawrence, the headmaster killed outside his school, at the funeral at Ealing Abbey in West London yesterday. Page 3

Intelligence shake-up to answer Scott secrecy attack

By PHILIP WEBSTER, NIGEL WILLIAMSON AND JILL SHERMAN

CHANGES in the handling of intelligence in Whitehall and new measures to reduce secrecy have been ordered by John Major after sharp criticism in the Scott report.

More intelligence material is expected to be distributed electronically and the Cabinet Office is to go "on line" to improve computer communication with MI5, MI6 and GCHQ.

Sir Richard Scott's report was highly critical of both "the culture of secrecy" in Whitehall and the failure of communication between departments, and the Prime Minister yesterday promised improvements.

Mr Major admitted that it would have been better if intelligence had been properly disseminated. He said: "The fact that there are something like 100,000 pieces of intelligence to be looked at in a short period is a mitigating circumstance, but still it can be improved."

The Prime Minister also continued to defend William Waldegrave and Sir Nicholas Lyell against opposition resignation calls, saying that Sir Richard Scott's inquiry into arms exports to Iraq had "comprehensively dismissed" damaging allegations against his ministers. But he acknowledged that the report had shown up "shortcomings and mistakes", and promised to learn from them.

Whitehall is already considering plans to:

- Review the code on open government;
- Reform export controls, particularly arms;
- Tighten the rules for ministers answering questions in the Commons;
- Curb the freedom of Customs and Excise to bring prosecutions;
- Redefine the role and powers of the Attorney-General and the Treasury solicitors;
- Review procedures to prevent future inquiries dragging on for three years or more.

The Scott inquiry found that MI6 failed to pass on information that large metal tubes produced by a Midlands manufacturer were probably intended for use in an Iraqi supergun, and the report said that proper use was not made of available intelligence on a number of other occasions.

Sir Richard also complained about the way ministers had replied to parliamentary questions in a way that represented a "deliberate concealment" and he urged a review of the practice whereby information about defence exports need not be given by ministers.

Continued on page 2, col 3

Government accused, page 10
Leading article and Letters, page 23
Vernon Bogdanor, page 22

Times man wins award



Anatole Kaletsky, above, Associate Editor of *The Times*, was yesterday named Commentator of the Year at Granada television's What the Papers Say awards.

The judging panel praised the incisiveness and wit of Mr Kaletsky's economic and political columns, which appear on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Times on the Internet
<http://www.the-times.co.uk>

Britain braced for Arctic weather

By ROBIN YOUNG

BRITAIN is facing more Arctic weather over the weekend with widespread snowfalls and freezing conditions predicted for much of the country by Monday morning.

Today will be wet with strong winds in the northern half of Britain, but with snow confined to hills in northern Scotland. In the South the day will be mild with temperatures of 8C (46F) to 10C (50F).

The cold change is expected tomorrow when rain spreading from the North will turn to sleet or snow and strong north-easterly winds will make it feel much colder as temperatures fall.

The London Weather Centre said last night: "We expect temperatures down to minus 3C by Sunday night, with frequent snow showers continuing into Monday,

Wildlife in danger from oil spillage

By ADAM FRESCO AND BILL FROST

SALVAGE experts aboard a crippled supertanker struggled last night to prevent an environmental catastrophe on the coast of west Wales.

As winds whipped a five-mile oil slick towards one of the most important wildlife habitats in Britain, plans were in hand to offload the remaining cargo of 136,000 tonnes of light crude oil from the Liberian-registered *Sea Empress*, 24 hours after she ran on to rocks near Milford Haven.

A clean-up operation was under way to prevent the spill spreading down the Bristol Channel. An estimated 6,000 tonnes of light crude poured into the sea after the accident on Thursday night. Several hundred tonnes have been washed up on beaches, headlands and nesting areas along the south Pembrokeshire coast. The coastline is home to half a million seabirds and colonies of grey seals.

The Department of Transport's Marine Pollution Control Unit yesterday sent seven aircraft fitted with dispersing spray equipment to the area. They were standing by to be deployed off St Govan's Head, centre of the main slick.

Gangs of council workmen, contractors and Tesco oil company employees were involved in the land clean-up.

Last night the European Commission announced that a European pollution task force had been sent to help clear the spillage. Brussels also promised financial support for the area of up to £250,000, with more cash if necessary to help to save wildlife.

Tugs struggle, page 4

Author of US book exposed

A political columnist with *Newsweek* has been fingered as the likely author of *Prime Colors*, the anonymous novel about scandalous goings-on in a US presidential election.

Joe Klein, an experienced reporter of the Washington scene, was named by Donald Foster, a professor at Vassar University, who used a computer to compare his work with the output of "Anonymous". Mr Klein, who is in New Hampshire covering the Republican primary, has left a less than convincing denial on his telephone answering machine. Weekend

Dürer at risk

The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge has been told to find £10 million to save one of Dürer's greatest masterpieces, *St Jerome in the Wilderness*, for the nation. The Bacon Baronetcy Trust is putting it up for sale. Page 3

Australian drivers are just the ticket for Oxford buses

By JONATHAN PRYNN
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

AN Oxford bus company has recruited thirty drivers from Australia after failing to find enough in Britain.

The first two to arrive will be wishing passengers *Go* day on routes between Oxford city centre and the suburb of Kidlington from next week after their 27-hour flights from the 35C (95F) heat of Brisbane.

The recruits: London-born David Manchard, 48, and Joe Lally, 45, who was born in Scotland, said they were

attracted by the excitement and challenge of working abroad, but would lose financially by it.

Harry Blundred, chairman of Thames Transit, which has a sister company in Australia, said the decision to recruit on the other side of the world was taken after a fruitless British advertising campaign.

It was far cheaper to pay the £400 single air ticket to fly qualified drivers from Brisbane than to train Britons. It takes up to three months to train a new driver, at a cost of about £2,500. The Antipodean drivers will initially be

paid around £250 a week, about £50 less than they could earn in Brisbane. However, their weekly earnings could rise to around £350 if they are promoted to the company's flagship "Oxford Tube" coach services to London.

They will live initially with colleagues, before finding rented accommodation. Several are bringing their families with them.

Mr Manchard and Mr Lally said the main difficulty was getting used to the dramatic change in climate, and complained about English days that

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THE TIMES ON MONDAY


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DEFEATING DEPRESSION

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12 PAGES OF TIMES SPORT

Rob Hughes on Shrewsbury v Liverpool

David Miller on Manchester United v Manchester City

Alan Lee on England v UAE in the cricket World Cup

EVERY DAY NEXT WEEK: COLLECT TOKENS FOR FIVE HOURS OFF FREE PHONE CALLS

Mail accused over Leeson's book

By ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THE *Daily Mail* has been accused of bank-rolling Nick Leeson, the rogue trader who brought down Barings Bank, by paying hundreds of thousands of pounds to promote his autobiography.

The Press Complaints Commission is to investigate a complaint from a reader that the *Mail* broke the newspaper industry's code of practice by publicising its serialisation of Leeson's book on television.

The commission's code bans

payment for stories "to people engaged in crime or to their associates" except where the material "ought to be published in the public interest". It also states that its rules should be applied "in the spirit as well as in the letter".

Leeson's publisher, Little Brown, confirmed that the *Mail* had acquired the serialisation rights "for free" in return for promoting the book. The cost of the advertisements is understood to be about £300,000. Leeson, who was jailed for 6½ years in Singapore in December, is

expected to benefit financially from the deal by way of increased sales of his book, *Rogue Trader*.

Peter Wright, deputy editor of the newspaper, said it was confident it had not broken the code of practice. "The *Daily Mail* paid no money for this book. We did advertise it on television but it is our normal practice to advertise major serialisations on television," he said.

Others in the newspaper industry have expressed concern that the paper has found a backdoor way of paying for

criminals' stories. Charles Moore, Editor of *The Daily Telegraph*, said his paper had refused to serialise the book. "The point simply is that Leeson will end up profiting from the serialisation. Whether they paid him directly or indirectly is not material."

Richard Addis, Editor of the *Daily Express*, said: "If the *Daily Mail* has in some way made Nick Leeson better off by doing what it has done, it seems that perhaps it has broken the spirit of the code."

Peter Preston, Editor in Chief of *The Guardian* and

The Observer newspapers, said that while the *Mail* may not have breached the letter of the industry's code, its actions had raised serious questions which the commission needed to resolve. "The spirit of the code is that criminals should not be allowed to profit from their crimes and Leeson is a convicted criminal."

Lord Wakeham, chairman of the PCC, said that the complaint about the *Mail* would be considered by the commission in the normal way. "We would not make any comment about its merits

under the code until there has been a proper investigation."

Rosalie McFarlane, publicity director for Little Brown, said that Leeson intended to use the £450,000 advance he received for the book, plus any further royalties, to pay his legal fees. She pointed out that book publishers are not bound by any rules banning payments to criminals.

"Leeson's story is one that needed to be told. If he had been a serial killer, we might not have published it. It all depends on the nature of the crime," she said.



Crowds at the peace rally organised by trade unions in Belfast yesterday. Sinn Fein supporters faced criticism when they tried to join in

IRA faces anger as peace protests grow

By NICHOLAS WATT
IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

TENS of thousands of people in the north and south of Ireland registered their anger with the IRA yesterday for breaking its ceasefire. Protestants and Catholics stood together at peace rallies.

As Irish government officials held their first face-to-face meeting with Sinn Fein since the Docklands bomb, the IRA faced mounting pressure on both sides of the border not to jeopardise 17 months of peace.

Dick Spring, Ireland's deputy prime minister, led the calls for peace when he launched a campaign in Dublin to encourage people to wear white ribbons. More than 12,000 of the ribbons were distributed throughout

the Republic. The Irish rugby team, which has players from both sides of the border, will wear the ribbons today when it takes on France in Paris.

Mr Spring said: "White is the colour of peace and all people who want peace now should wear a white ribbon over the coming days."

His dismay at the collapse of the ceasefire was shared by tens of thousands of people who turned out at peace rallies in Belfast, Armagh, Enniskillen, and across the border in Dublin, Limerick and Galway. RTE, the Irish state broadcasting company, held a minute's silence at 12.30pm.

By 5.00pm more than 36,000 had registered their support for peace in a telephone poll organised by the five Belfast newspapers. The

only sour note of the rallies came when Sinn Fein supporters moved in with banners calling for "All party peace talks" at the largest rally outside Belfast City Hall. One trade unionist turned to a member of Sinn Fein and said: "How can you come here after the bomb in London?"

John Monks, the General Secretary of the TUC, told the rally, which was organised by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, that the IRA attack was "cowardly and indiscriminate". His anger was shared by people in the crowd who carried banners which said "No going back" and "Say yes to peace."

A married couple demonstrated Northern Ireland's determination not to slip back into the violence of the Trou-

bles when they revealed that they have received 100,000 letters and cards since launching a peace group after the Docklands bomb. Gavin and Margaret Walker, from Bangor, Co Down, who have a 15-month-old son, personally delivered some letters to political parties in Belfast yesterday, including Sinn Fein.

Senior officials of the Irish government met Gerry Adams at a secret location. Dublin cut off ministerial contact with Sinn Fein after the bombing, and the officials said the IRA must restore its ceasefire before the party can rejoin the political process. Mr Spring said the officials planned to "give vent" to the Government's anger. He also signalled a softening of his opposition to Britain's plans

for elections: "If it transpires that the only route to all-party talks that is certain is through an elective process, then we should not rule that out."

Mr Adams said after the meeting that he was no more optimistic, and insisted that the peace process could be rebuilt only if the two governments agree to all-party negotiations. At Sinn Fein offices in West Belfast, he said: "The ceasefire has to be restored. It is a matter of how it can be restored and when it can be restored."

Sinn Fein contacts with the Irish government played a key role in persuading the IRA to call a ceasefire in 1994. Mr Adams's grim demeanour yesterday showed that the IRA bombs have dealt a devastating blow to the relationship.

Al Fayed agrees to libel payout

Mohamed Al Fayed agreed yesterday to pay six-figure damages to Christoph Blettermann, former deputy chairman at Harrods, whom he had accused of embezzling millions of dollars. The Harrods chairman settled the libel action against Herr Blettermann, 48, days before a High Court trial was due to begin. Herr Blettermann was advised to sue by his English-born wife, Francesca, who used to work in the Harrods legal department. Mr Al Fayed will also pay costs.

Goldsmith enlists 400 to fight treaty

Sir James Goldsmith, the Euro-sceptic financier, is reported to have recruited more than 400 prospective candidates to stand for his Referendum Party at the next general election.

Sir James intends to field candidates in seats where none of the representatives of the main parties has pledged support for a referendum on the Maastricht treaty.

Transsexuals lose High Court battle

Two transsexuals who were certified as male at birth have lost their High Court battle for the right to be legally recognised as women. The pair, known as "P" and "G", were refused leave to appeal for a judicial review of the refusal of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages to allow them to alter the sex on their birth certificates.

Homebuyers must beware

Enfield Borough Council in north London lost an appeal against a ruling that local estate agents acted in good faith when they were told by the seller that a bungalow had planning permission when it did not have. The appeal confirms the understanding that solicitors rather than estate agents are responsible for checking for planning irregularities.

Intelligence

Continued from page 1

The Cabinet Office said that the reform of intelligence handling was "to ensure that the right intelligence material is sent on time to the right person". In particular, new technology would be harnessed to "make the retrieval, storage and analysis of material easier, quicker and more accurate".

The Ministry of Defence has com-

missioned a study of computer technology in intelligence handling, while the Department of Trade and Industry plans to introduce an IT system to handle intelligence reports.

In his first response to the Scott report yesterday, Mr Major praised the "very thorough, very competent" handling of the inquiry and said: "The report was about whether innocent men were going to be sent to jail by conspiracy and whether Saddam Hussein was being armed by the British

Government. These frankly were the smears that Robin Cook and others have run. They are comprehensively dismissed and I don't think you can overlook the fact that is what the report was about. There is no doubt that did not happen. It never occurred to me for a second these charges could conceivably be true but it was important the British nation realised they weren't true, now they do."

Labour and the Liberal Democrats nevertheless joined forces yesterday to

demand that Mr Waldegrave and Sir Nicholas resign.

They are hoping that over the weekend some Conservative MPs will come to agree with them and Rupert Allason was yesterday the first to break ranks and cast doubts on Sir Nicholas's chances of survival.

Sir Nicholas is, however, supported today by six leading QCs who say in a letter to *The Times* that he followed recognised procedures fairly and properly in the Matrix Churchill case.

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Jewel thief, 67, promises to retire

Judge takes pity on ageing Raffles who lost his touch

By PAUL WILKINSON

A JUDGE took pity yesterday on an ageing jewel thief when he promised to retire after almost half a century of international crime. Morris Spurling, known to Interpol as Morry The Head because he is bald, stole jewels worth millions of pounds in his crooked career.

Described in court as a Raffles-type character, his life of crime began shortly after the Second World War when he stole from the jet-setters he lived among on the Riviera and the resorts of South Africa.

But yesterday, aged 67 and reduced to living in a hostel in Milton Keynes, he turned up at Teesside Crown Court with his bags packed for a spell in prison after admitting the theft of five gold chains from a shop in Thirsk, North Yorkshire, last September.

Gordon Nuttall, the Assistant Recorder, accepted his promise and put Spurling on probation for two years. Outside court Spurling wiped away a tear as he leaned on his walking stick and said the judge had been marvellous: "I'm a silly old thing, and it is time to give it up."

"I've never stolen jewels

from a beautiful woman; only from shops and warehouses. The most valuable item was a diamond and emerald necklace in Rome 20 years ago, worth £500,000, then. But I have had an incredible life. I've got more stories in me than Hemingway."

Leslie Spittle, in mitigation, said: "It is not only in fiction that a Raffles-type jewel thief ends up in the south of France with a blonde on the arm and a yacht in the bay. You look beyond me into the dock and you see the reality."

"But at 67 with no money, no family really, as he would put it, it's not worth the candle. It is a pathetic, sad picture. He is amusing, intelligent, irritating and frustrating. But he is not without hope."

Mr Spittle said Spurling had stolen because he was addicted to gambling. It was more than 30 years since a court spared him jail. He had spent 41 of his last 45 years behind bars. "He has realised that if he does not stop offending, then all he has got left is his final years as a guest of Her Majesty."

"He ought to take up smok-

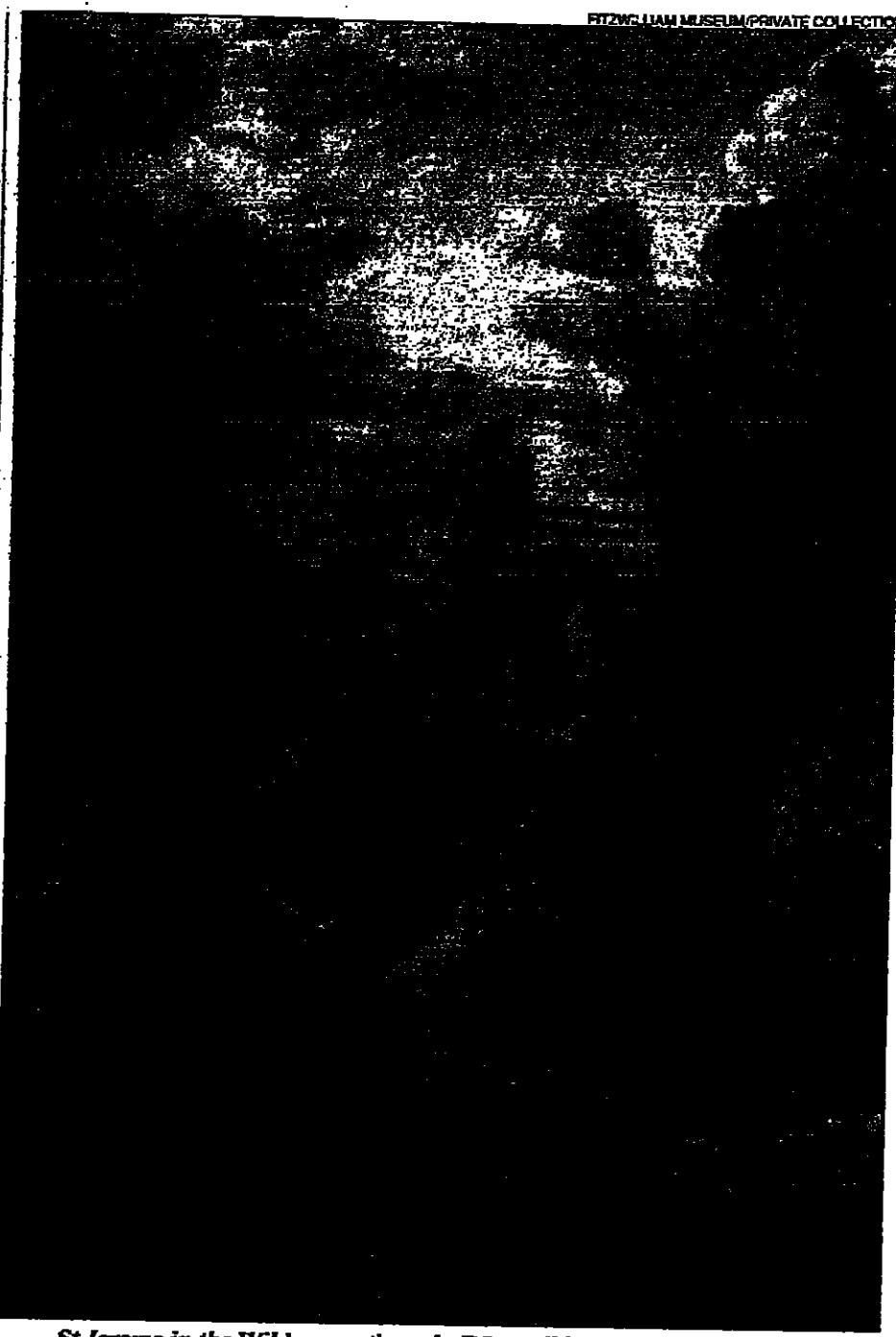
ing a pipe, buy a pair of carpet slippers and leave other people's jewellery alone."

The judge told Spurling: "I am going to take what must be regarded as a wholly exceptional course and if I am going to attract criticism for that I am going to have to endure it, but I am going to give you that chance at your time of life."

Spurling was caught on a security video in the jewellers. By chance the policeman sent to the shop had stopped Spurling earlier that morning for a motoring offence and noted the registration number of his rented car.

Jane Wangh, for the prosecution, said Spurling was jailed for six years in Nice in 1964 for jewel thefts and banned from there for two years. In 1970 he was jailed for five years at the Middlesex Area Sessions for stealing 56 rings and a brooch and obtaining gold and silver watches by deception.

In 1975 he was jailed for nine years in Johannesburg for stealing diamonds then worth £400,000. He was also jailed in Brussels for jewel thefts. His last conviction was 12 months jail imposed at Exeter in 1994, his first in 1950.



St Jerome in the Wilderness, the only Dürer oil in British private hands

£10m needed to save Dürer's gem for nation

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge has been told to find £10 million to save one of Dürer's greatest masterpieces, *St Jerome in the Wilderness*, for the nation.

The owners of the picture, the Bacon Baronetcy Trust, whose main trustee is the landowner Sir Nicholas Bacon of Raveningham Hall in Norfolk, have decided to put it up for sale 40 years after lending their treasured exhibit to the Fitzwilliam. Experts fear the painting, which dates from about 1494 and measures 9in by 7in, might go abroad if it were sold on the open market.

St Jerome is the only oil painting by the German master (1471-1528) in British private hands. Most of Dürer's work is scattered among the world's museums. There are only two other Dürer paintings, both portraits, in British galleries: the Royal Collection and the National Gallery.

The family purchased the painting for £30 in the 1840s as the work of a minor Italian artist. In 1956 it was authenticated as the work of the great northern artist by the art historian David Carriv, who stumbled across a Dürer study that resembled the lion in the painting. There were other stylistic clues in the handling of the landscape and figure. The Bacon family, unable to afford the insurance of their newly valued painting, decided to lend it to the

Fitzwilliam. Duncan Robinson, the Fitzwilliam's director, said: "This is a picture that shouldn't leave the country. The word 'jewel' always comes to mind. It's a gem of a picture. The paint is as fresh as the day it was applied. The colours have a vibrancy. It is as dazzling as a most spectacular illuminated manuscript."

It has been suggested that if the painting came on to the open market, it could fetch £15 million. A private treaty sale, with its tax concessions, would enable the Fitzwilliam to acquire it for less.

Mr Robinson said: "We are not likely to raise it from our own funds unless there is massive public support." The museum is approaching heritage bodies for help. The National Art Collections Fund, the leading art charity, has donated about £300,000. A spokeswoman said: "We regard this as a unique possibility. How often do paintings by Dürer come up for sale?"

The museum fears that, unless it can raise the money, American and German collections in particular would put up a hard fight to acquire a Dürer. Scholars are mystified by the image on the reverse of the panel, which shows a yellow fireball in the sky.

Dürer, who would have been 23 or 24, was in Venice studying the Italian masters at the time. Their influence would explain the original attribution to an Italian artist.

Stabbed head was my daddy, boy tells funeral

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

THE eight-year-old son of Philip Lawrence, the headmaster who was killed outside his school, led mourners in prayer at the funeral service yesterday.

The top of Lucien Lawrence's red head was just visible above the lectern where his father used to read the epistle at Sunday Mass in Ealing Abbey, west London.

"God in heaven, help us to think for a minute about the time when we all met my daddy," he said. "Help us to think of his kindness. Not only was he headmaster but he was my daddy too."

"I remember the time he bought me something even though it was too expensive. The time he learnt me to spell words, how gentle he was. We played football in the hallway even when he had lots of work to do. Loving God, help us to pray that we will meet my daddy again."

Lucien's older sister Unity, in her bidding prayers at the Requiem Mass, linked the end of the IRA ceasefire with the violent death of her father. "This week has shown us a world in which peace is fragile and promises are broken," she said. "May we always be true to ourselves so that we may live with one another in peace and unity."

Frances Lawrence, the headmaster's widow, read from the first letter of St John: "In love there is no room for fear, but perfect love drives out fear, and whoever is afraid has not come to perfection in love."

Michael Hopley, the family's parish priest, said Mrs Lawrence had chosen the reading because it underlined some of the affection Mr Lawrence held towards her and their four children: Maroushka, 21, Myfanwy, 17, Unity, 13, and Lucien. "Philip

first met Frances when they were both teaching here at St Benedict's School. That's the girl I'm going to marry" became a fulfilled prophecy in 1973. Last Saturday they would have celebrated their 23rd wedding anniversary," said Father Michael.

"In one of the thousands of letters that Frances received, a parent quoted his eight-year-old son, 'Dad, what Philip did is like Jesus did, isn't it?'"

The family remained composed throughout although some in the congregation sobbed as Mefanwy played Fauré's plaintive *Elégie* as a cello solo.

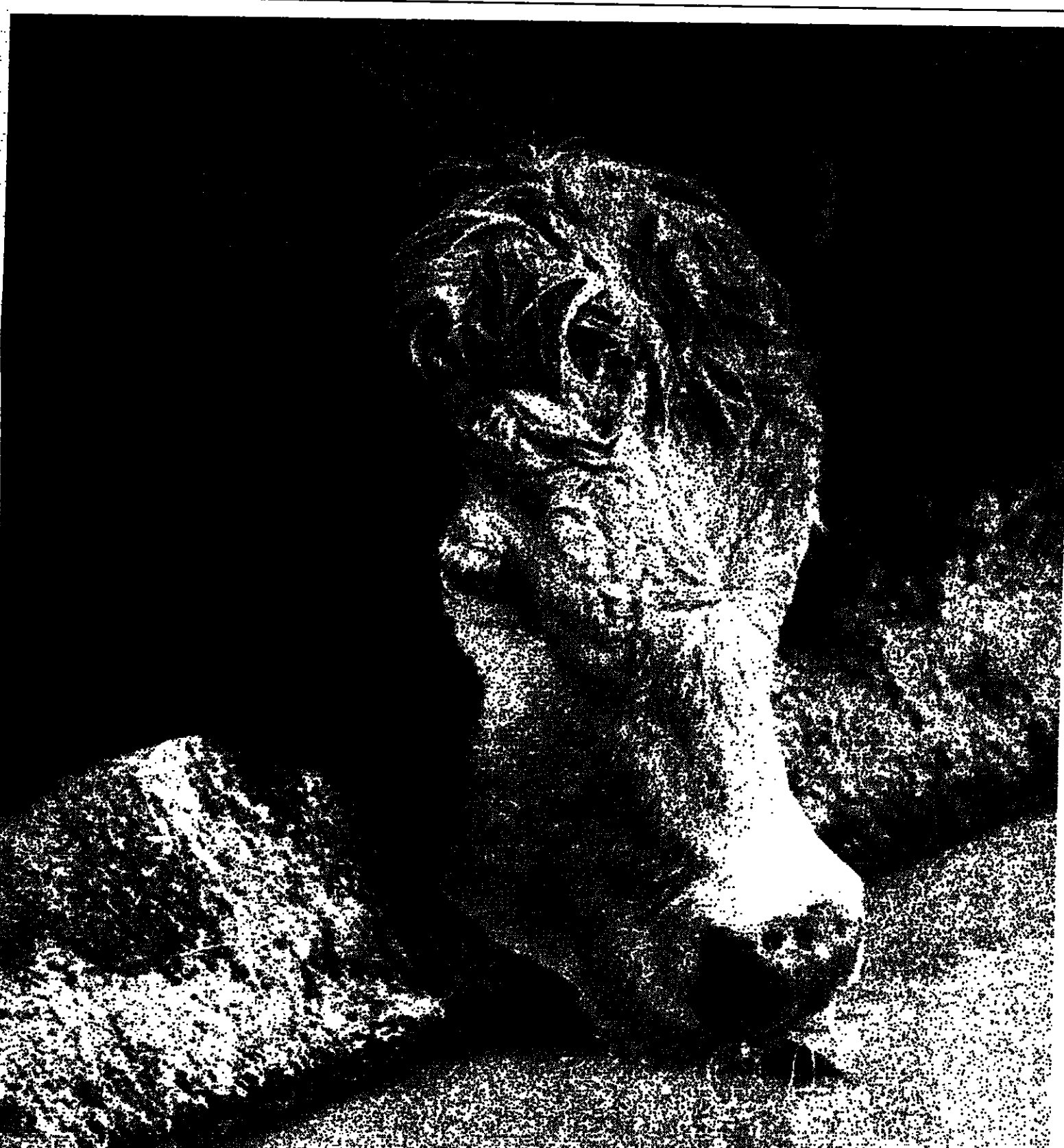
Before the funeral service, as the family arrived on the steps of the abbey, Mrs Lawrence, in a long, dark brown coat and carrying a posy of red roses, handed a single flower to each of her children.

They walked slowly up the aisle of the 19th-century church and each placed a rose on the coffin, which had been waiting in front of the altar.

After Mass, Lucien was given the bunch of roses to carry out of the abbey before his father was interred.

Police saluted as two bishops, an abbot, the Mayor of Ealing, the local MP, several headmasters, 300 mourners, his mother and three big sisters were led out of church by a striding little boy in his best jacket and trousers, now the man of the family.

A 15-year-old boy has been charged with murdering Mr Lawrence last December and a boy aged 14 is accused of conspiracy to wound another 14-year-old boy. An appeal to help the Lawrences and create a memorial has raised £112,000. Donations to The Philip Lawrence Memorial Fund should be sent c/o Ealing Abbey, Charlbury Grove, London W5 2DY.



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY



Equity in move to bar 'black Brando'

By DALYA ALBERGE

THE actors' union Equity is trying to block a Trinidadian actor, described by Sir Peter Hall as a "black Marlon Brando", from appearing at the National Theatre because they say the role could be taken by a British actor.

Sir Peter said that Michael Cherrie, 24, was an extraordinarily powerful talent. "He is extremely witty and dangerous on screen. The camera loves him. I would love to see him work at the National or Royal Shakespeare Company." He intended to cast Cherrie in his National Theatre production of *Oedipus*.

Equity, however, is not convinced that none of its 42,000 members could have taken the role. The union represents a profession in which 25 per cent of members did not work last year and only 12 per cent were employed for more than 40 weeks.

An Equity spokesman said the union had advised the Department of Employment that a permit should not be issued because there was no evidence that any attempt had been made to find an actor in Britain. The union is waiting for more evidence from Sir Peter, who says that he and his casting director looked at 100 actors before casting Cherrie.

Fallen computer whiz-kid logs off after avoiding jail

By STEPHEN FARRELL

A FORMER schoolboy prodigy who set up his own computer company at the age of 16 declared his eight-year business career over yesterday, after narrowly avoiding jail for extortion and managing companies while bankrupt.

Gary Marshall, who owned a Lotus at 17 before he could even drive, was fined £2,000 and ordered to carry out 240 hours of community service. It was his second court appearance within two years.

His business empire had collapsed in 1994 with debts of £350,000, and creditors won a court order banning him from

being involved in the management of a company for eight years. Marshall, now 24, ignored the ruling and set up new companies, disguising his involvement.

Last December he was found guilty of being concerned in the management of four companies, Total Technology, PC Express, Total Computers, and ICRG, based in Aberdeen. He was also found guilty of extorting £3,000 in cheques from two directors, Kenneth Holmes and Stephen Canvey. Yesterday the Aberdeen Sheriff, Robert McCallum, said that the offences were serious, but

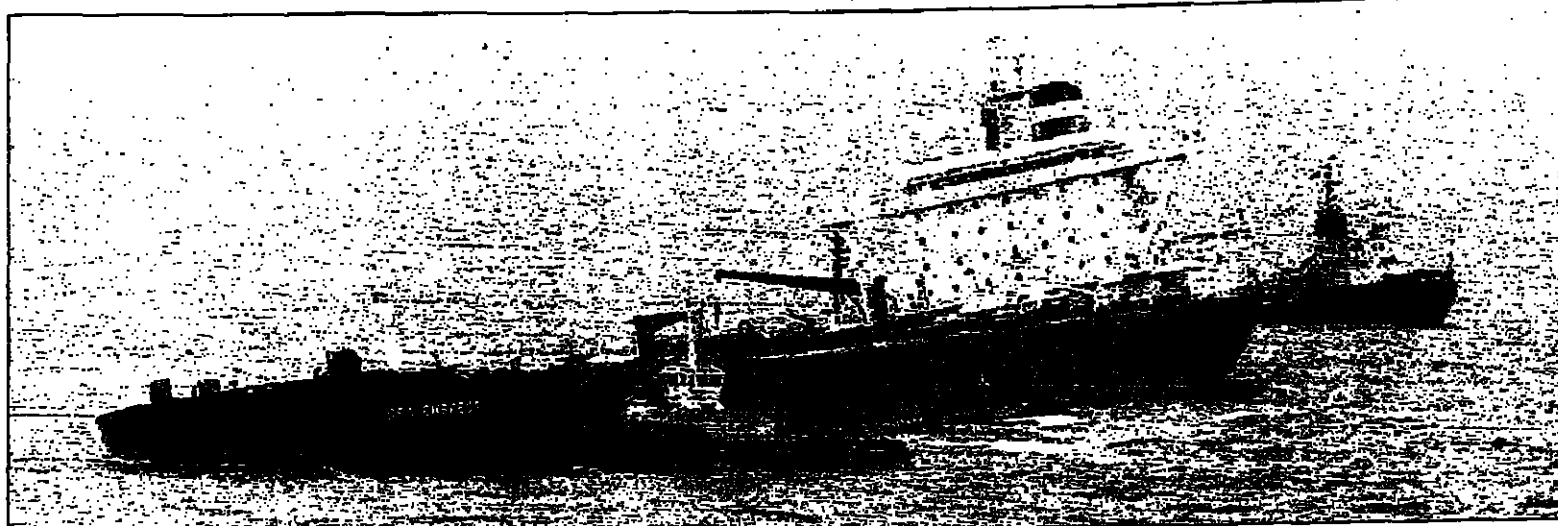
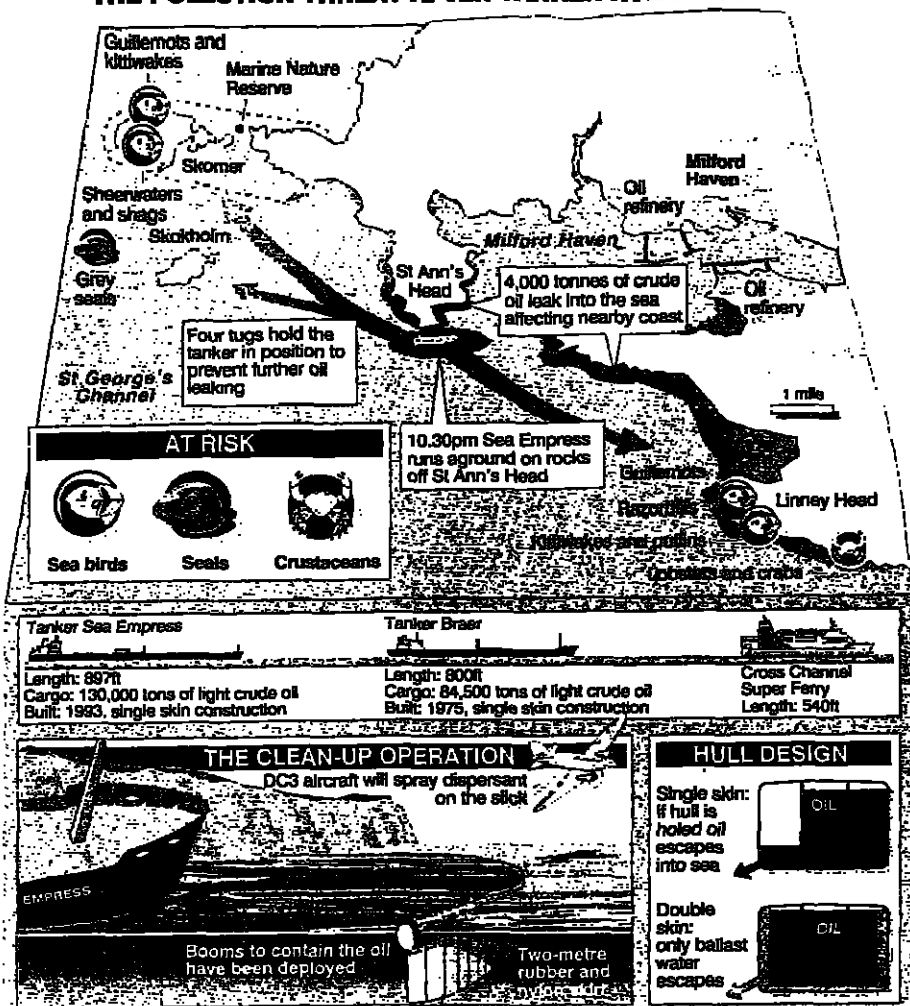
did not warrant a prison sentence.

Later Marshall said he was glad to avoid jail, but described his business failure as a "large regret". He had no intention of holding directorships when his ban expires in six years. "The last year has been one heck of a strain. I now want to lead a quiet life and get back to normality."

Marshall left Aberdeen Grammar School at 16 and set up his first computer company. By 18 he was managing director of three. But soaring costs caught up with him. He took orders but could not supply the equipment.

Tugs battle to keep stricken oil tanker afloat

THE POLLUTION THREAT AFTER TANKER RUNS AGROUND



By ADAM FRESKO, BILL FROST AND NICK NUTTALL

PROTECTIVE booms were placed in front of vulnerable and environmentally important marshlands in West Wales last night in case more crude oil leaks from the stricken *Sea Empress*, which has already lost at least 4,000 tonnes. The technique was perfected during the Gulf War after the Iraqi army sabotaged Kuwaiti installations to try to cause an environmental disaster.

Two teams of Dutch divers assessed the supertanker's damaged pump room and the cargo tanks holed in the accident. The *Sea Empress* remained afloat and was

Winds threaten coast clean-up

deterioration in the ship's condition or any further loss of oil.

However, conservation groups said that it would be several days before the full impact was known. Louise Tickle of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds said volunteers would be standing by throughout the weekend to help casualties. "Given the amount of oil that has gone into the sea, we are not that

hopeful of escaping serious problems," she said.

Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, flew over the *Sea Empress* in a helicopter late yesterday afternoon and viewed the main slick. After a briefing by harbour officials and the anti-pollution team, he said: "Everything possible is being done to make sure no more oil leaks from the vessel. There is also a lot of work going on to deal with the pollution both at sea and ashore."

The London Weather Centre last night confirmed the environmentalists' worst fears, forecasting winds of 30mph. A spokesman said: "The winds are going to be very lively, starting in a north-westerly direction and then moving more westerly."

Sir George said that a full inquiry into the accident had already begun. He added: "Clearly, there was either a loss of power or loss of steering which resulted in it going aground."

A spokesman for the ship's owners travelled to Milford Haven to help the inquiry. John Brechin, operations manager of the Glasgow-based Acomarit (UK) Ltd, said: "It's too early to determine the cause of the accident but we are working closely

with the authorities to find out exactly what happened."

He confirmed that an experienced pilot was aboard the tanker, which went into service in 1993.

The clean-up operation launched yesterday is organised by the so-called "dirty dozen" who work under the Marine Pollution Control Unit's chief executive, Chris Harris.

Based at Southampton, the unit works to a national contingency plan which sets out procedures to be followed. It first sets up a marine emergency operations room at the Coastguard Agency headquarters in Southampton and arranges for a joint response centre as near as possible to the scene of the incident. This local centre takes on-scene decisions and is responsible for beach cleaning, while the unit at Southampton deals with the sea clean-up.

The unit can call upon seven DC3 aircraft, of which five are based at Coventry and two at Inverness. The aircraft are used to spray the oil from about 25ft above the sea.

Also at the unit's disposal are two Cessna light aircraft which can be used for aerial surveillance. Their electronic equipment can detect the position, nature and extent of oil slicks on the surface.

An oil spill information centre at Southampton has a computer which, when fed with the appropriate data, provides a reliable prediction of the spread and movement of any slick.

Demands grow for inner hull to reduce leaks

By BILL FROST

THE spill could have been prevented if the *Sea Empress* been double and not single-hulled, it was claimed yesterday by merchant marine officers, conservationists and Labour politicians. They pointed out that not one drop of oil escaped into the sea last October when the "twin-skinned" tanker *Borga* ran aground at the same spot and in similar weather.

In the United States, single-hull tankers are banned from coastal waters. Washington, unlike London, bowed to pressure from environmentalists and marine safety bodies.

Graham Allen, a Labour transport spokesman, said: "Double hulls should be a requirement of entry to ports such as Milford Haven where marine life needs to be protected. In addition, the enforcement of escort-towing to cover for mechanical failure would prevent accidents like this." Mr Allen said that coastguard manpower at the site of the accident was unacceptably low because of government "cost-cutting".

Numast, the merchant navy officers' union, described the latest incident as "a disaster waiting to happen". Brian Orrell, the general secretary, said ministers were playing "Russian roulette by allowing ever-increasing amounts of flag-of-convenience shipping to take our trade while presiding over the demise of the British fleet."

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) is still

considering a call for all new tankers to be double-hulled. In a report after the *Braer* spill in 1993, Lord Donaldson of Lynton said that a great deal of research remained to be done "before anyone is in a position to say, unequivocally, which design is the most effective".

The *Braer*, which was Liberian-registered, as is the *Sea Empress*, spilt 84,000 tonnes of crude oil after it ran aground off the Shetland Islands in January 1993. Lord Donaldson recommended the IMO closely monitor double-hulled tankers "to obtain a clearer picture".

Captain Peter Cooney, managing director of Glasgow-based Acomarit (UK) Ltd which manages the *Sea Empress*, said: "Single-hulled ships are perfectly safe."

A company spokesman said that the vessel was skippered by Eduard Bolgov, who with his Russian crew has been with the ship since her launch in 1993.

The Chamber of Shipping, which represents owners and operators, last night rejected suggestions that single-hull vessels should be phased out as soon as possible. "If you hit an obstacle hard enough in a twin-hulled tanker you will come to grief too when the second skin is breached. Mothballing the single-hulled tankers would simply ensure that the oil industry had real problems with deliveries. There are not that many double-hull vessels out yet."

Seabirds at risk as spill comes ashore

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

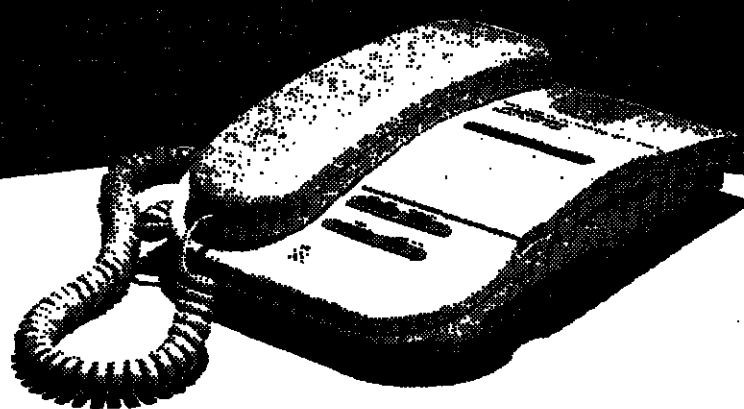
THOUSANDS of seabirds, including guillemots, fulmars, gulls, shags, razorbills, gannets and cormorants, are at risk from the oil spill. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds said the region had been identified for possible designation under European Union law as a "special area of conservation" because of the international importance of its marine life.

Guillemots and other seabirds, which spend the winter out at sea feeding on fish, are just starting to return to coastal nesting sites in cliffs and dunes. Fortunately, the oil appeared to be moving

away from the tiny islands of Skomer, Skokholm and Grassholm, home to grey seals as well as large breeding populations of seabirds and the world's second biggest colony of gannets.

The most immediate threat is to bird colonies along the stretch of coast known as Freshwater West to the south of Milford Haven where some oil is already reported to have come ashore. If the oil drifts further to the east it could threaten a cormorant colony on St Margaret's Island and large numbers of scoter — sea ducks — in Carmarthen Bay.

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MPs back tougher action against noisy neighbours

By ALICE THOMSON
POLITICAL REPORTER

ROWDY neighbours face £40 fines and the confiscation of hi-fi equipment if they refuse to tone down night-time revelry under a Bill supported by the Commons yesterday.

The Private Member's Bill, which clamps down on loud noise between 11pm and 7am and will apply to sounds ranging from music systems to domestic machinery, was given an unopposed second reading. Noise must exceed 35 decibels when measured in the complainant's house.

First-time offenders will be given a £40 spot fine, and persistent offenders will be fined a maximum £1,000. They could also lose their CD and record collections as well as stereo systems.

James Clappison, a junior Environment Minister, said the Government considered the Bill an important piece of social legislation. He said 35 decibels was equivalent to the noise experienced in the front bedroom of a house on a busy suburban road at night.

All sides of the House welcomed the move although

most backbenchers thought the Bill should have been more punitive. They agreed that they had received far more letters complaining about noisy neighbours than they had about the Scott inquiry. Labour said the £40 fine would not be a strong enough deterrent for many inconsiderate neighbours.

Harry Greenway, the Tory backbencher who introduced the Bill, said it was not a killer measure and people could still hold parties, they would just have to be more

restrained. Mr Greenway, MP for Ealing North, said excessive noise caused extreme stress and suffering. It could drive some people insane and others to murder.

Mr Greenway said complaints had more than trebled between 1983 and 1993, largely due to changing music tastes. He said £40 should be a starting point with a fine of at least £100 once the system was established.

Lady Olga Maitland (C. Sutton and Charnock) one of the leading campaigners for

change, said there were 112,000 recorded complaints of excess noise last year and "many, many more" cases where complaints were not made.

Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs said the Bill could have gone much further. Tom Cox (Lab. Tooting) said the Bill dealt with noise only between 11pm and 7am and he called for a loud music curfew between 10pm and 7am.

Warren Hawkesley (C. Halesowen and Stourbridge) said more than 20 people had died as a result of noise disputes with neighbours in the past two years. "Apart from the damage to people's health through acute stress and being deprived of their sleep, noise pollution from neighbours regrettably leads to violence on very many occasions," he said.

Andrew Hargreaves (C. Birmingham Hall Green) admitted that he had once been issued with a statutory nuisance order after an alarm had gone off in his home while he was away. He supported the Bill and said that it should include noise emanating from cars.

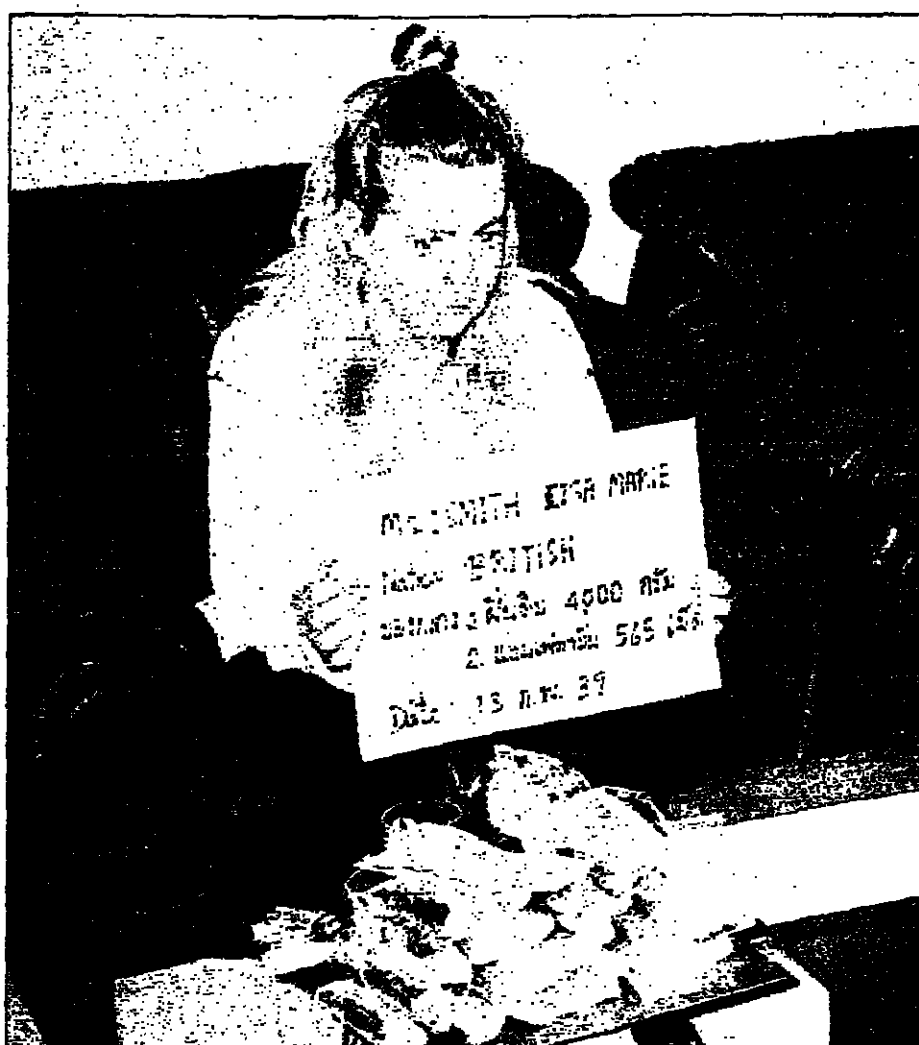
Patrols monitor front line

THERE were 131,153 complaints about domestic noise lodged by environmental health officers in 1993-94, equivalent to 3,466 noisy neighbours for every million households. However, there were only 500 prosecutions and 400 convictions. The Bill will make it easier to penalise the noisy.

One hundred and eighty local authorities have already set up out-of-hours complaints services, including 86 that run round the clock.

Westminster in London spends £800,000 a year on its service and prosecutes about one noisy household a week.

According to John Connell of the Noise Abatement Society, the life of a noise patrolman is a dangerous one. "There is a serious risk of violence," he said. "They have been held hostage and threatened with death. One had his nose cut off. They are dedicated frontline troops." Westminster has bought anti-stab jackets for its patrols.



Lisa Smith, 20, the British woman held for opium smuggling, pictured in Bangkok yesterday. She is now thought to have been carrying hashish, a lesser offence

Mountain fans meet for social climbing

By ROBIN YOUNG

CLIMBING enthusiasts will converge today for mountaineering's first summit conference in Britain, to be held at sea level in Llandudno, North Wales.

The British Mountain Conference is designed to rival such events in North America and Italy. The star speaker for the 1,500 delegates is a Slovenian climber who has never before visited Britain.

Silvo Karo is the only man to have climbed two separate routes up Cerro Torre in Patagonia, which many count as the most difficult mountain in the world. Jim Perrin, the conference organiser, said yesterday: "He has a stratospheric reputation."

Among the other speakers are Doug Scott, the first Briton to climb Everest, and the Australian Greg Child, who is to receive an award for his writing on climbing. A "downside" award is to be made to a company accused of "abusing climbing skills" by helping to clear protesters from trees on the route of the Newbury bypass.

Irishman makes light of Einstein

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

AN IRISH engineer has set out to show that Einstein got it wrong when he devised the theory of relativity. Dr Al Kelly, former director of generation for the Irish electricity board, believes early experiments show flaws in Einstein's claim that the speed of light is fixed.

In a lecture at Trinity College, Dublin, on Thursday night, Dr Kelly cited experiments conducted by a French physicist called Sagnac in 1914, which showed that the time taken by light to complete a circuit when mounted on a spinning disc differed according to whether it went with or against the direction of spin.

Yet observations show that the speed of light is unaffected by the speed of the Earth's orbit around the Sun, when by

analogy with the rotating disc, it should be affected by the Earth's rotation, westward-travelling light moving faster than light from the east.

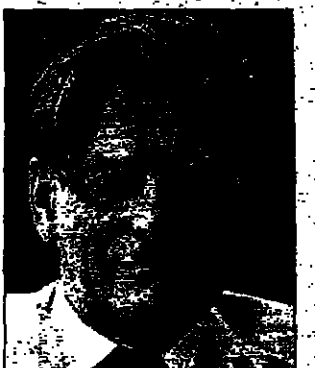
An experiment conducted in 1925 by Albert Michelson, who first measured the speed of light, confirms that this is so, Dr Kelly says.

Sir Arnold Wolfendale, of Durham University, a former Astronomer Royal, said experiments like these were extremely difficult to do. "You have to be very careful and you can't demolish a theory like Einstein's on the basis of crummy experiments."

Sir Arnold said particle accelerators around the world were proof of the truth of relativity. As the particles are accelerated to close to the speed of light, their mass increases, as Einstein predicted, and their lifetime is extended by the effect of time running more slowly.

"Einstein wasn't necessarily right in every last particular but I can't believe that any major divergence wouldn't have been picked up long ago by the accelerators," he said.

Dr Kelly was unabashed. "Engineers don't give up," he said. "They reckon one and one make two. I know a clergyman who says he preaches mysteries he doesn't understand, and I think the physicists are doing the same."



Kelly claims theory of relativity is flawed

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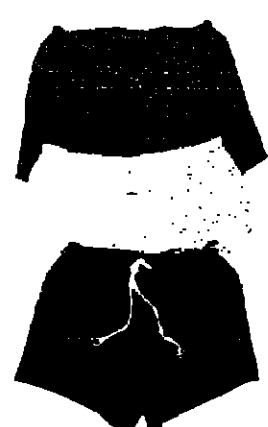
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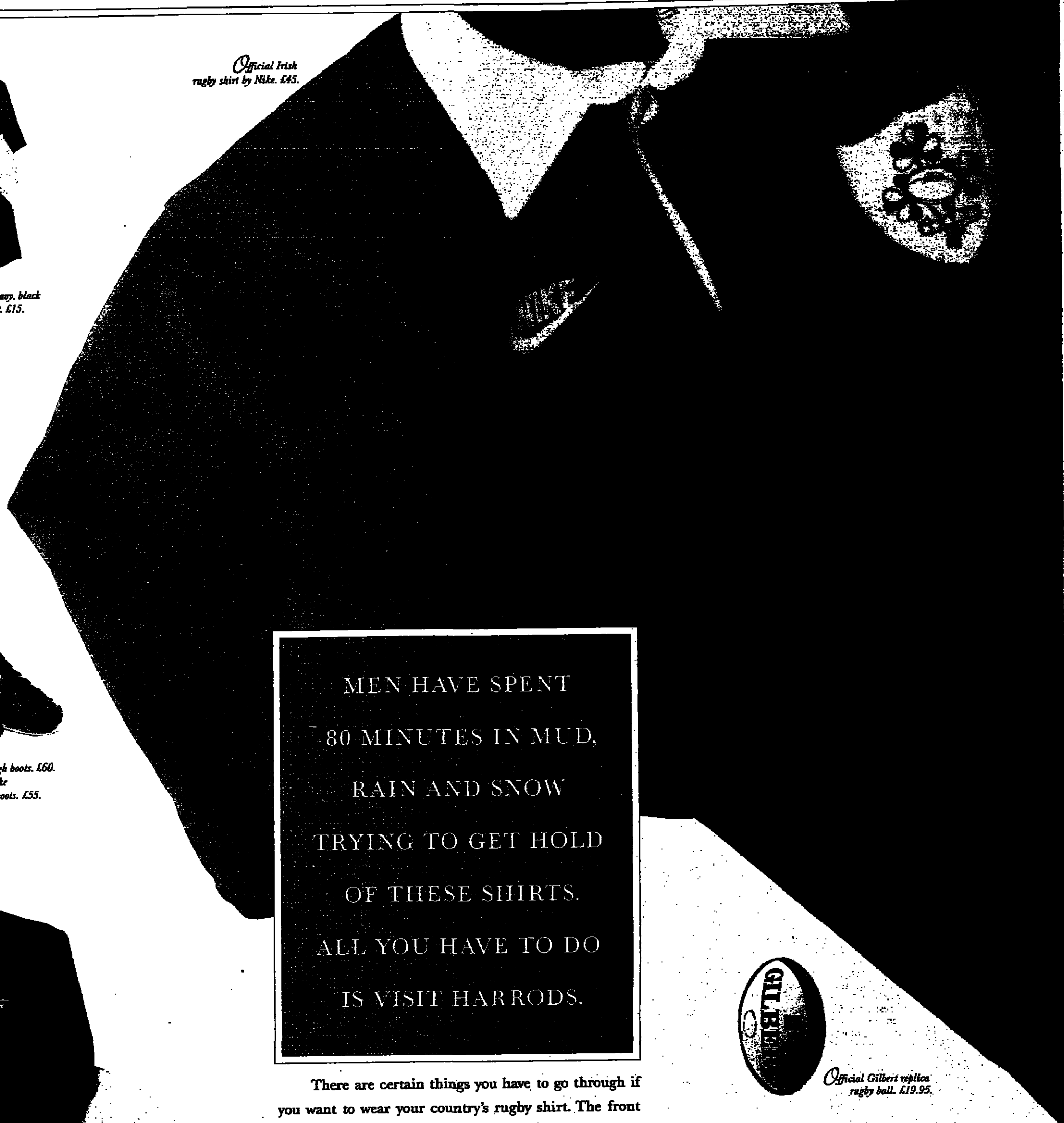


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'NHS let us down in time of need'

Cancer unit stops treating terminally ill to save money

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

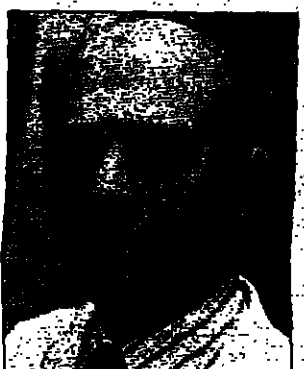
A CANCER centre is turning away terminally ill patients and concentrating on those it has some chance of curing because it is short of money. At least 40 patients a week are being refused radiotherapy or chemotherapy at the Bristol oncology centre, which is part of Bristol Royal Infirmary.

Dr Victor Barley, the centre's clinical director, described the situation as "tragic and frustrating". He said yesterday: "We are unable to treat a number of patients, mainly those in pain with widespread cancer who would normally benefit from radiotherapy or chemotherapy. Instead, their GPs have to give them morphine at home, which we believe gives patients a poorer quality of life."

"We are not stopping treatment altogether. We are giving priority to those who need treatment urgently and where a cure is possible." Dr Barley said the restriction had been in place for a fortnight.

One of those refused admission is Janet Ricketts, 37, who has suffered a recurrence of ovarian cancer. Mrs Ricketts's GP, Dr Maryn McCowan, said he had visited her at home and found her doubled up on the floor in her mother's arms.

"She was in dreadful pain despite the morphine I had given her. She is a lady who has coped with an incredible amount in her life. I felt she needed to be admitted as an emergency to an oncology bed and the consultant I tele-



Barley described the situation as "tragic"

phoned agreed but he said he hadn't got a bed.

"I said it was crazy. She is the most uncompromising lady I know and she wasn't going to make a fuss but I was indignant. I am a placid person but this got to me and I felt I couldn't tolerate it."

Mrs Ricketts's mother, Margery Peters, 65, said: "As a carer, and as a mother, I feel very angry. I also feel that the NHS has let us down at our time of need. The message sent out is that if you fall ill at the end of the financial year you just don't get the treatment you need."

Dr Barley said Mrs Ricketts should have been admitted. "It would have been more satisfactory for her to come in and her pain would have been more quickly dealt with."

He said the centre was treating 25 per cent more patients than a year ago, when it treated 1,300 in-patients and 2,400 day cases, and was facing a shortfall of £500,000. A ward had been closed, one of five linear accelerators (radiotherapy machines) taken out of service and staff posts left unfilled to cut spending. He said the increase in referrals was the result of the rising incidence of cancer in the ageing population, advances allowing more patients to be treated and a trend for general surgeons to refer more patients to specialist units.

"This is not a sudden problem. It has been happening for years in every oncology unit in the country," Dr Barley said.

Pamela Charlwood, chief executive of Avon District Health Authority, said it had increased its £4.7 million allocation to the centre by £400,000 this year and could afford no more.

"This is a problem created by the potential of the NHS to do so much more for so many people. The doctors are having to restrict eligibility for treatment to those for whom they can do most. That means palliative care has to be provided in the community."

"No one believes it is an ideal situation but we do not have unlimited funds. The

staff must make very difficult judgments and we will support them."

Dawn Primarolo, Labour MP for Bristol South, blamed the infirmary, which houses the centre, for letting the situation build up. "I am not happy the hospital are doing all they can," she said.

Last night Alan Langlands, NHS chief executive, said that hospitals were putting too much emphasis on treating more patients and not enough on the quality of care. He told the BBC's *Look North* programme: "We may well have reached a point where we need to think about the qualitative aspects of care and be less concerned about always increasing throughput in hospitals. That means the drive for efficiency in resources might have gone a bit far."



Virginia Bottomley leaving the High Court after giving evidence in a libel case

Bottomley denies framing doctor over man's death

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY told a libel jury yesterday it was "complete nonsense" to suggest she had framed a consultant over a patient's death to deflect attention from a shortage of hospital beds.

The former Health Secretary was called to give evidence at the High Court on behalf of Mirror Group Newspapers, which is fighting an action brought by Anthony Percy, consultant orthopaedic surgeon at Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup, southeast London.

Mrs Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, denied that she tried to make a "sacrificial lamb" of Mr Percy, who was called "Dr Dolittle" in the *Daily Mirror* after he failed to attend a man with brain injuries who was then flown 200 miles for treatment.

Mrs Bottomley also denied that she called in a memo for his role in the affair to be "flagged up". During 2½ hours in the witness box, she told the court she had not exercised any influence on what should go into a report

on the incident, or had anything to do with the decision to censure him.

A memo from her private secretary responding to the report asked "what about the consultant refusing to appear?", but that simply reflected her concern about publicly mentioning Mr Percy's role unless it had been substantiated or clarified.

Mr Percy, 55, from Bickley, southeast London, claims the *Daily Mirror* suggested he was guilty of gross dereliction of duty, bore some responsibility for the death of Malcolm Murray, 45, and should be suspended. Mr Murray died at Leeds General Infirmary last March after being flown from Queen Mary's when a junior doctor could find no neurosurgical intensive care bed for him in the South East.

The newspaper, which denies libel, says its story was an accurate account of a report of the South Thames regional health authority, which censured Mr Percy. The case continues on Monday.

Scots drop table of hospital fatalities

By A STAFF REPORTER

THE Government published survival figures yesterday for patients treated for heart attacks and strokes in Scottish hospitals instead of the so-called death league tables.

The statistics released by the Scottish Office record the number of patients who were alive 30 days after receiving emergency treatment in particular hospitals. The first such report, published in December 1994, compared the number of people who had not survived.

Dr Robert Kendall, Scotland's Chief Medical Officer, said they had decided to change the emphasis. "Survival is really what matters. It seemed more logical," he said. Scottish health chiefs emphasised that the figures were intended for doctors and clinicians to compare performance of hospitals and to decide if they had to make changes in their practices.

Hospitals in Edinburgh, Fife and Argyll had a comparatively high percentage of patients in emergency read-

missions within a month of being discharged after treatment, the figures show. At Argyll and Bute NHS Trust, 13.89 per cent of patients were back within 28 days between October 1991 and October 1994.

At Fife Healthcare Trust the figure was 13.56 per cent while at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh it was 13.82 per cent. Overall 72,947 patients were taken back to Scottish hospitals within 28 days, 11.13 per cent of the 655,272 who had been treated in an adult medical specialty.

Bellshill and Monklands NHS Trust Hospitals in Lanarkshire had the highest proportion of deaths within 30 days of admission for heart attacks. The survival rate was 74.38 per cent, compared with the Scottish average of 79.34 per cent.

The highest survival rate was at Borders General Hospital NHS Trust, at 84.31 per cent, followed by Western General Hospital, Edinburgh, with 83.85 per cent.

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'It will be a tragedy if this great design is marred by infill or tinkering of any kind'

Award-winning architects attack changes in court

By Marcus Binney and Stephen Farrell



The acclaimed Truro courts, opened eight years ago. The building's original architects say an extension will make the most admired feature dark and dingy

THE Lord Chancellor's Department has outraged the British architectural establishment by altering one award-winning court building and stripping another of elaborate Victorian features.

The alterations to Truro Crown Courts, opened eight years ago and awarded a succession of prizes, are being made without reference to the original architects and will, they claim, ruin the building's most admired feature.

In London the stripping of the ornate interior and central oak staircase from the former Knightsbridge Crown Court, built in 1894 as the Hans Crescent Hotel, has left the building an empty shell.

The architects of the Truro Courts, Evans and Shalev, won awards for their work from the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Civic Trust, the Royal Fine Art Commission, the Institute of Structural Engineers and the Concrete Society. Now a first-floor extension is being thrust into the high space linking two roundabouts, which bring light to the main concourse.

Eldred Evans, one of the partners, said: "It literally ruins the building's interior. We have happily done modifications at Truro before, but this time they have not consulted us. The changes make the centre of the courts dark and dingy." David Shalev added: "It is like putting a mezzanine in a cathedral."

The Lord Chancellor's De-

partment says the alterations are necessary because the workload of the courts has increased. The first-floor extension will provide judges' chambers to deal with small claims and family cases.

Lord St John of Fawsley, chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission, said yesterday: "The Truro courts have raised the standard of court architecture throughout the country. It will be a tragedy if this great design is marred by infill or tinkering of any kind."

Owen Luder, president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, said: "The Truro court is a beacon of quality among buildings that are

more often the object of ridicule than admiration."

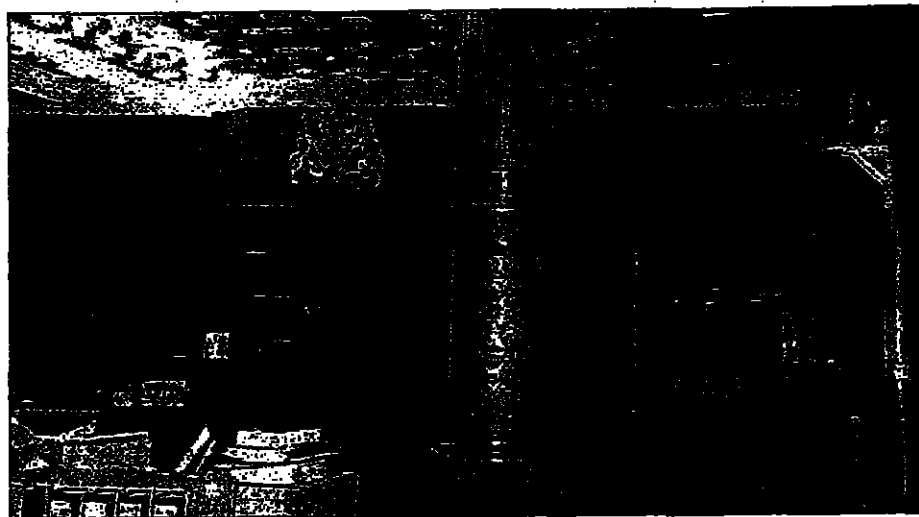
Paul Monaghan, architect to the Lord Chancellor's Department, said: "These are minor works with a value of £100,000. Our agents, Turby Project Management, are building surveyors, not architects, but in my view their approach and detailing is particularly sensitive."

The former Knightsbridge Crown Court was bought by Harrods for £25 million in December, after the interior had been removed. Mohamed Al Fayed, the store's chairman, accused the civil servants responsible of philistinism. "It is nothing less than a

scandal that the splendid joinery of this handsome interior can be destroyed without any possible sanction," he said.

Richard Holder, senior architectural adviser to the Victorian Society, said last night: "The only reason for taking out the roof beams would be to convert a room into two floors, but to take them out and just leave it like that is tragic."

Emma Phillips, Secretary of Save Britain's Heritage, said the destruction was unnecessary and no thought had been given to preservation. "This building was obviously a very elaborate example of sumptuous late Victorian craftsmanship," she said.



The former Knightsbridge Crown Court before and after its interior was stripped out, with the loss of ornate Victorian beams, panelling, and central oak staircase

Schoolboy detained for fatal stabbing

Mark McNeil, 15, who stabbed another boy to death in a "final showdown", was ordered to be detained for six years by the Old Bailey. McNeil, of Harrow, north London, could have avoided a fight with Mark Osbourne, 16, last August but could not resist a challenge when other boys called him "chicken". He was cleared of murder but found guilty of manslaughter.

£96,000 award

Nadine Challinor, 31, whose career with Greater Manchester Police was destroyed when a car thief ran her down, was awarded £96,500 damages in the High Court in Manchester. She suffered back, arm and neck injuries in the incident.

Appeal fails

The Court of Appeal upheld the conviction of two brothers for the murder of their sister and her lover. Abdul Haq, 30, and Mohammed Saleem, 37, of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, were jailed for life in 1991. The victims' bodies have never been found.

Bathtime death

Akeem Mahmood, aged 18 months, died from burns after jumping into a scalding bath while his mother's back was turned. The coroner at Abergavenny, Gwent, absolved his mother Laila, 20, of Newport, Gwent, of any blame for the accident.

Rare eagle stolen

One of only eight Bonelli's hunting eagles in Britain has been stolen. Andrew White, 25, a falconer from Bulwell, Nottingham, is offering a reward for the return of Bonnie, 16, which is worth £5,000. The bird was taken from an aviary at his house.

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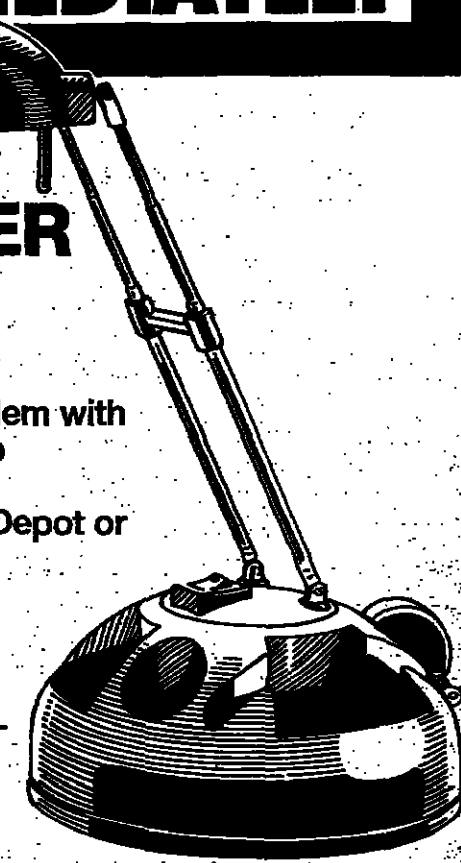
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South West faces more standpipes Drought region's precious water washed out to sea

BY NICK NUTTALL AND ALASDAIR MURRAY

SOUTH WEST WATER has lost hundreds of millions of gallons of water from a reservoir serving an area still affected by drought. The error by a company widely criticised for its service leaves customers in Devon and Cornwall facing a summer of even tougher restrictions despite paying the highest average charge, at £309 a year, in the country.

South West Water, many of whose 1.5 million customers have endured supply restrictions for months, inadvertently sent about 1,000 million gallons (or 5,000 megalitres) from the Roadford Reservoir swilling down the Wolf and Tamar and out to sea. The loss was equivalent to about 50 days' supply to Plymouth and south Devon.

Even by the dismal stan-

dards of the water industry, South West Water has been exceptionally accident prone. The company has been regularly criticised for its poor water quality and for supply shortages that affected half of its 1.6 million customers last summer. In August 100,000 customers in Devon were forced to boil their water after a stomach bug outbreak.

The public outcry eventually proved too much for the company's board, and South West recently announced a clean sweep of its senior management. Bill Fraser, the managing director, whose recent pay increase from £157,000 to £217,000 a year was heavily criticised by shareholders, is retiring at the end of this month. He holds options worth about £120,000. Keith Court, the executive chairman, who was paid £164,000 last year and holds options worth about £100,000, will step down in April.

about a third of its capacity. The NRA forecast that the source is at risk under all rainfall scenarios.

The extra releases are being blamed on poor forecasting by the company of water demand at the height of last summer's drought. South West, in common with all water companies, discharges water from reservoirs down rivers to water treatment works.

Bob Baty, South West Water's engineering and scientific director, said yesterday that predicting customer demand was a tortuous business. "We have to make releases in anticipation of the highest level of demand. If we reduced the releases there is a serious risk of breaching our abstraction licences and damaging the environment," he said.



Yorkshire puts up charges by 5.6%

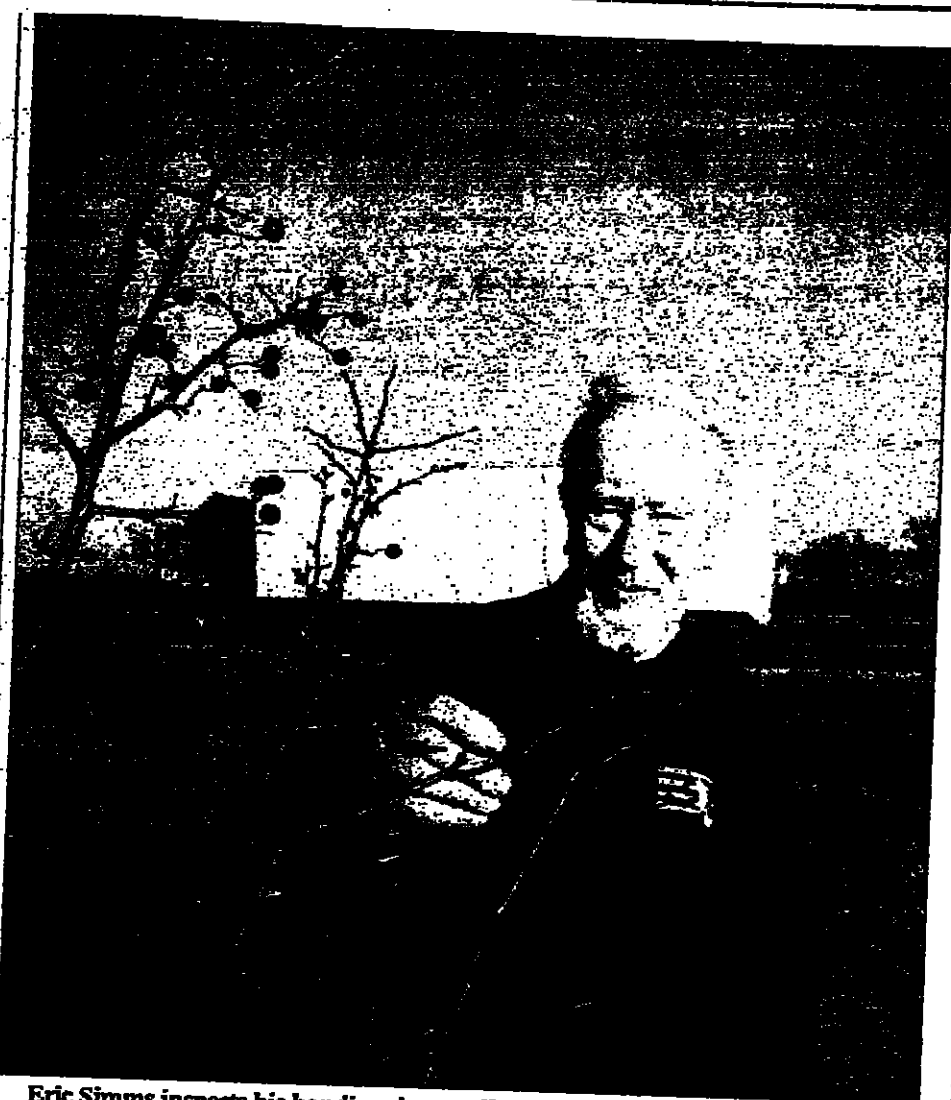
YORKSHIRE WATER, whose reaction to the drought has been widely criticised, came under attack again yesterday after it announced it was raising bills by almost twice the rate of inflation (Nick Nuttall writes).

The company, which is still operating drought restrictions in and around Bradford and has had to take water to some homes by tanker, said it was raising charges by 5.6 per cent. It pointed out that the rise was in line with limits set by the Office of Water Services last April. The limit for five years was set at inflation plus 2.5 per cent. With inflation at 3.1 per cent, the increase is the maximum allowed. The company denied that the price rise

was to cover drought-related expenses.

The decision dismayed business people and consumer groups. David Wilkinson, head of the Bradford Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said yesterday: "We have had a disastrous summer in which everyone has been urged to reduce consumption and yet there are still restrictions. To impose a price hike roughly twice the rate of inflation is not only going to impose a heavy financial cost on businesses but will cause their attitude to Yorkshire Water to harden."

Penny Ward, of the pressure group Water Watch, said the rise was "an absolute disgrace", given that the service had been reduced.



Eric Simms inspects his handiwork as traffic thunders along the A1 behind him

Naturalist verges on the A1 for inspiration

A RETIRED television producer has won a conservation award for turning the verges of a busy dual carriageway into a nature reserve.

Eric Simms, 74, noticed the unusual flora and fauna alongside the A1 in Lincolnshire when he drove past while producing a nature series for the BBC in 1979. He stopped to have a look and started a 12-year love affair with the roadside.

The South Witham Nature Reserve comprises two kilometres of verges and banks alongside the A1, a road underneath it and a slip-road off to the village.

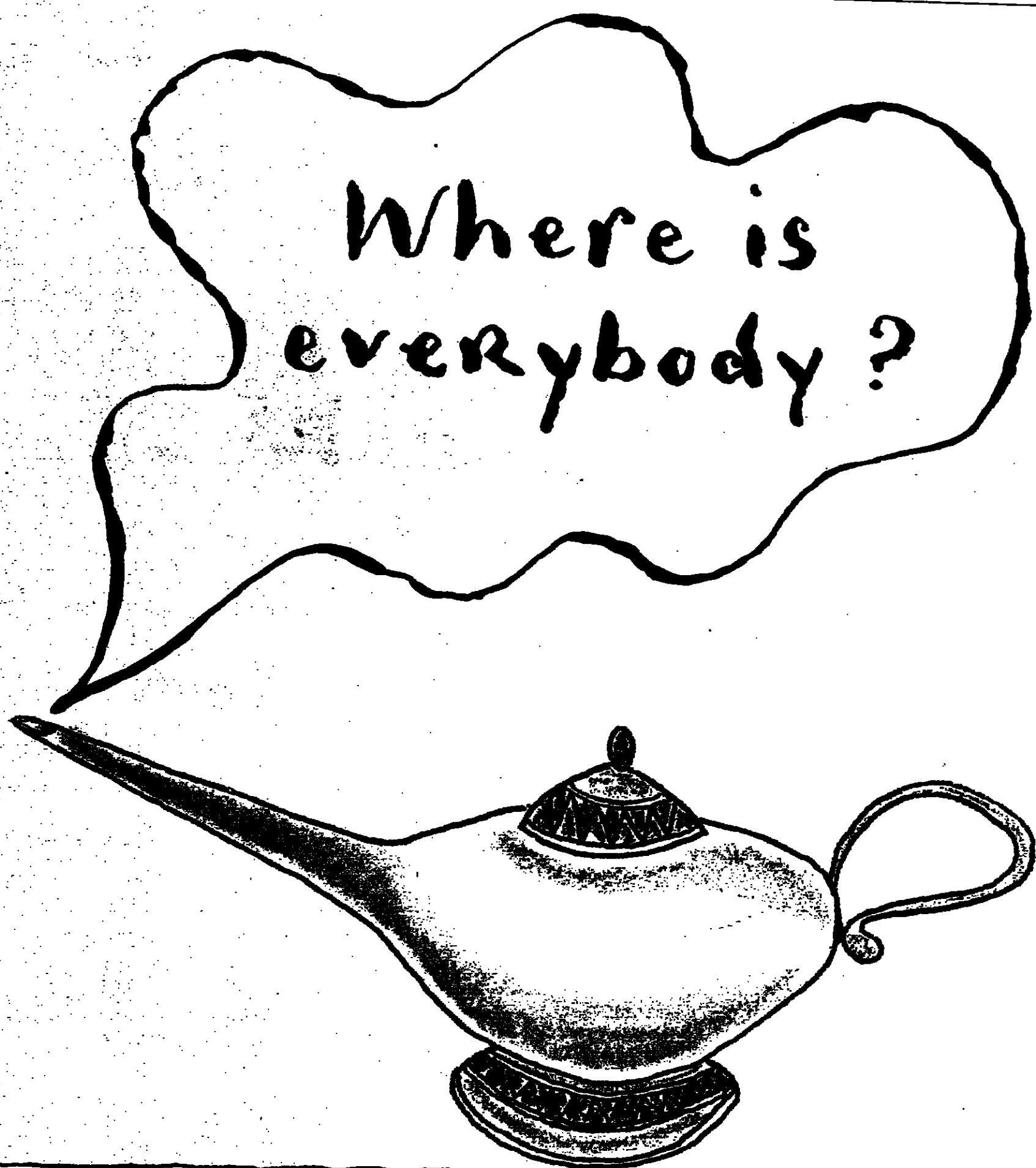
When Mr Simms retired he moved to South Witham to devote more time to the reserve. His award for environmental achievement comes from the Lincolnshire Trust for Nature Conservancy.

Mr Simms believes the busy road helps the flowers. "The wind from the lorries passing at high speed blows the seeds around and the flowers are able to spread rapidly," he said. "It's remarkable really that the fumes don't do any harm."

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Labour and Liberal Democrats call for Waldegrave and Lyell to resign

Government accused of hiding Scott criticisms

By Jill Sherman, Political Correspondent

LABOUR and the Liberal Democrats joined forces yesterday to demand that William Waldegrave and Sir Nicholas Lyell resign in the wake of the Scott report.

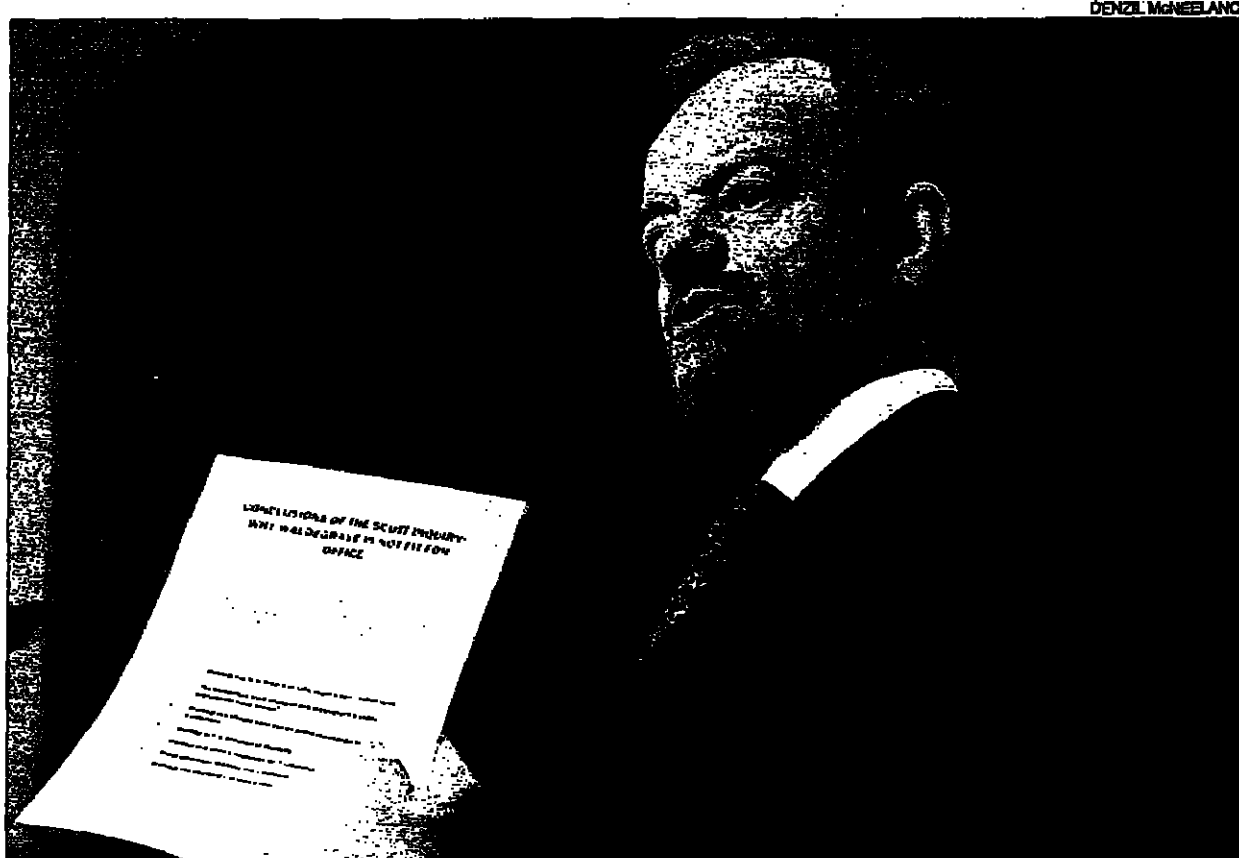
Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, and Menzies Campbell, the Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesman, attempted to mobilise support from potential Tory rebels as well as the public, held a joint press conference at which they accused the Government of lying about the Scott report to hide its more damaging findings.

In a sign that Labour and the Liberal Democrats might co-operate more closely as the general election approaches, the two MPs also called for reforms to improve parliamentary accountability, including a Freedom of Information Act.

Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, made clear that the Government had little intention of acting on many central criticisms in Sir Richard Scott's report. One recommendation was that public interest immunity certificates not be used in criminal cases. At his press conference yesterday, Mr Lang said other judges disagreed with Sir Richard on this. The certificates had been used before and would continue to be used.

Mr Lang disagreed with Sir Richard's assertion that guidelines on arms sales to Iraq had been changed. Denying that government was cloaked in secrecy, he said: "Our objective is to be as open as possible."

But Mr Cook was determined not to let Sir Richard's criticisms be spirited away by the Tory public relations machine or Mr Lang. Labour is furious that when the Scott report was published, on Thursday, the press and Tory MPs were given "selective and misleading" papers on it containing only the Tories' defence. Ann Taylor, shadow Leader of the House, is writing to all Tory MPs with Labour documents on the report



Robin Cook at the press conference he held with Menzies Campbell, his Liberal Democrat counterpart

to balance the crib-sheets supplied by the Government.

Mr Cook said the two parties were pursuing a combined attack, on parliamentary grounds, rather than taking a partisan approach. The issues went to the heart of the constitution. The report had provoked a "parliamentary crisis" that could be cleared only by ministerial resignations.

Mr Cook said Mr Waldegrave had misled MPs 30 to

40 times and had been criticised between 20 and 30 times by Sir Richard. "If he does not resign, no minister of this Government will be believed again," Mr Cook said.

Mr Campbell said Mr Waldegrave was one of the ministers responsible for a decision that had led to the principle of ministerial accountability being "systematically ignored." He added: "It is not possible to think of any other

sphere in which an individual could be so criticised and still retain his job."

Mr Cook said Sir Nicholas could not now remain in office. The report found that the Attorney-General's advice to ministers that they had to sign public interest immunity certificates "had no legal foundation." He was found to be "personally at fault over failing to ensure that the Matrix Churchill trial judge was in-

formed of Michael Heseltine's reluctance to sign a certificate. Mr Cook also criticised the decision of ministers that the debate, on February 26, would be on an adjournment motion, so that Opposition parties would be unable to table an amendment, such as one calling for resignations.

Vernon Bogdanor, page 22
Leading article and Letters, page 23

Instant reaction cannot dispel every shadow

THE Government has no shortage of chutzpah. John Major led a chorus of gleeful senior ministers yesterday claiming victory, or any name escape, in the Scott affair. They may be right, thanks, paradoxically, to Sir Richard Scott himself. Before his report was published, several Tories argued that his inquiry had been unfair to witnesses. In the event, Sir Richard was painfully fair and balanced, about motives if not actions, so there is something in the report for everyone.

Ministers could justify their "not guilty" claims by putting the charges against them in the most extreme terms, and then saying they had, in Mr Major's words, been "comprehensively dismissed by Scott. The Tories have argued that the inquiry was "about whether innocent men were going to be sent to jail by conspiracy and whether Saddam Hussein was being armed by the British Government."

Expressed in these oversimplified terms, admittedly sometimes used by Labour spokesmen, the report clears ministers. And, having set the debate in these false terms, the Government then brushes aside the rest of the report. Shortcomings and mistakes are admitted and will be considered very carefully by the Government, but the implication is that they are largely technical and boring, and of no real interest to anyone. Differences about the use of immunity certificates are dismissed as merely an argument between lawyers.

As a propaganda exercise, that has so far been successful.

not least because the Government has been able to mount a defence. But it fails to answer questions posed by the report. From the start, the inquiry has concerned ministerial accountability to Parliament and the conduct of the Matrix Churchill trial. The report contains many highly critical passages about both, as Robin Cook and Menzies Campbell pointed out yesterday. There are numerous sections casting doubt on the competence, if not the good faith, of ministers and civil servants. The Labour and Liberal Democrat case is that ministerial responsibility does not just rest on good intentions but also relates to conduct in office.

Even if the more lurid and extreme charges are dismissed, there are still substantial points to be answered, not only on the details of the cases but also on ministers' relations with Parliament. The new Commons Public Service Committee could make a start by summoning the two key ministers and Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary, before the full debate on the report on Monday week.

Mr Cook and Mr Campbell have landed several blows, but none so far is likely to achieve a knockout. Their problem is that public, or rather press, attention to the Scott affair is likely to be limited, and the political agenda could soon move on.

PETER RIDDELL

MPs fail to resist TV over-exposure

By Alice Thomson, Political Reporter

POLITICIANS will prove soon that they are prepared to do almost anything to appear on television, including being interviewed on the lavatory.

A new Channel 4 comedy show next Friday has asked backbenchers to perform outlandish stunts. Many have complied, but there are some limits beyond which even media-mouths fear to go.

Jerry Hayes, who has already dressed up as a French maid to prove his worthiness as Tory MP for Harlow, has agreed to wear a bear costume, but he drew the line at appearing as an off penis, saying: "I don't mind putting a costume on, but that would be a perfect tabloid picture."

Two other Tory MPs, David Martin and David Amess, submit to gruelling tests for the Mark Thomas Comedy

Product. They have their backsides photographed by a fluffy bear and play noughts and crosses and draw their constituencies on a woman's stomach. They also pretend to be ancient rock stars strumming guitars and crooning.

Opposition MPs are even less camera-shy. George Galloway, Labour MP for Hillhead, is interviewed sitting on the lavatory at his home. But although Mr Galloway proves that he thinks he is young at heart, he cannot answer basic questions about the bands Take That and Pulp.

The Liberal Democrat Simon Hughes turns his living-room into a disco complete with dry ice and displays his dancing skills. He then shows the film crew his underwear drawer and offers pair of boxer shorts for charity.

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Preachers 'must give meaning to world'

By RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

PREACHERS must rediscover the Bible's "good promise" to give meaning to a spiritually lost world, a theologian says. "The 20th-century problem is neither death nor guilt, but meaninglessness," David Buttrick, a professor of homiletics, writes in a paper published by the College of Preachers.

Professor Buttrick, whose paper coincides with the college's launch of the 'second Preacher of the Year award, sponsored by *The Times*, predicts that preaching will become more evangelical and less biblical. "People these days wander the world without a clue. They live in a series of short-term purposes — 'I will go to school, I will buy a car' — but people have no overall theological vision by which to live."

Professor Buttrick says: "We live after Freud, and what grandmother attributed to God is now 'anxiety hysteria'. In the 20th century, the Church handed over the province of nature to the scientist and the province of the heart to psychiatry."

Preachers turned to history and the Bible instead. "We compressed Christian faith into not much more than 'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so'. Our sermons tend to speak of a once-upon-a-time, past-tense God," Professor Buttrick, from Vanderbilt University, Tennessee, says.

At Your Service
Weekend, page 3

Shamed don must pay back £160,000 for stolen books

By TIM JONES

A DON jailed for two years for stealing rare books from college libraries to settle mortgage debts was ordered to pay £160,000 in compensation yesterday. Most of the money is expected to be raised from the sale of his house.

Dr Simon Heighes, a presenter of Radio 3's *Composer of the Week* programme, was a trusted visitor at university libraries holding some of Britain's rarest books. He lectured at The Queen's College, Oxford, is an authority on baroque music and was regarded as a respectable academic and musical scholar.

However, he abused his position to loot libraries of 78 antique treasures and sold some of them for a total of £140,000. The most valuable work was a 1687 first edition of Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, alone worth £67,500. It had been kept in Christ Church library for more than 300 years. Heighes sold the book for £65,500.

Yesterday, at the compensation orders were made at Northampton Crown Court, there was confusion over the location of the book. The court was told that it was back with an Oxford bookshop, which had bought it in good faith from him. But a spokesman for Blackwell's bookshop said it was not with them and was with the person they had sold it to, or another buyer.

Heighes, of Oxford, was sentenced to two years' jail in December after admitting six counts of theft, five of obtaining property by deception and one of attempted deception. Another 130 offences were taken into consideration.

When he was sentenced, Judge Francis Allen told Heighes: "Many people respected you in academic, broadcasting and classical music circles but you grossly abused that trust. You have not simply been a thief, you have used your position of esteem and trust to perpetrate carefully planned thefts of rare and valuable books."

Oxford Crown Court had heard that Heighes was racked by low self-esteem after separating from his partner. He began by stealing musical manuscripts from the library at Trinity College, London, and then took volumes from Oxford libraries at Christ Church, The Queen's and Trinity. Heighes made repeated sales trips to Sotheby's, London, and to Blackwell's, claiming the stolen works came from his grandfather's collection.

When police raided his address they found eight rare books in a suitcase under his bed. Seven of them had come from Christ Church, the other was from The Queen's College, Oxford.

Yesterday Judge Allen, sitting this time at Northampton, ordered Heighes to pay com-



Heighes: abused trust of university libraries

penation of £80,245 to Blackwell's, £52,940 to Sotheby's, £20,895 to Christ Church, £5,200 to Trinity Music College and £1,350 to The Queen's College.

Nigel Daly, for the prosecution, said Heighes had £198,687 available from the sale of his house and an inheritance from his grandfather.

He said: "If he pays this figure of compensation, he will not have made a profit from his offending. In fact he will have lost."

In addition to the *Principia*, other missing works included

an 88,000 volume of Newton's *Opticks* (1704), believed now to be somewhere in Germany, a £3,200 volume by the 17th-century composer Frescobaldi, last traced to a dealer in Rome, and a £19,000 astrological text by Edmond Halley, *Catalogus Stellarum Australium* (1679), last traced to a dealer in London.

After the don's arrest in May last year, detectives and a team of antiquarian book experts followed a trail from Britain to America, Germany and Italy to try to trace the works. They found all but "minor" books, and have appealed to dealers and collectors to return them.

After the thefts, Christ Church reviewed security measures and the Bodleian Library is considering introducing electronic book tagging to prevent similar offences.

Making the order for compensation, Judge Allen said he was pleased to hear the Newton book had been recovered. He said: "Nothing else approached that in individual value or rarity."

But Blackwell's were insistent the book was not with them. A spokesman said: "I understand it has been traced, but I do not know where it is."

Credo

Escape a mess of pottage on wobbly ladder of faith

Barry Overend

POTTAGE. Now there's a satisfying word. I'm not sure what it means exactly. The dictionary suggests both soup and stew, as if there were no difference. Perhaps only a connoisseur, like Esau, could spot the real thing.

He was so partial to pottage that he exchanged his birthright for a bowlful. Jacob, his scheming brother, was only too pleased to act as waiter. By the time Esau had had second thoughts about the bargain, Jacob had already deceived their elderly and blind father into bestowing on him the blessing rightly due to the elder son. Esau's appetite was now whetted more for revenge than for pottage. Jacob had to flee for his life.

Forced to rough it, Jacob dosed down at the roadside. There he dreamt of a ladder stretching from Earth to Heaven. The angels of God were going up and down. He took it as a sign that the spot where he was lying was not such a God-forsaken place. "Truly the Lord is in this place and I never knew it!" Jacob marked the site with a holy

stone to show that at that place Heaven and Earth were joined.

It is the precise nature of that link which strikes me as being particularly significant. Heaven and Earth were joined by nothing more substantial than a ladder. I was therefore dismayed to discover that in one children's version of the Bible, Jacob's ladder had become a "stairway". Something vital had been lost from the story. The insecurity of a ladder had been abandoned for the safety of a flight of steps.

A ladder is a basic, utilitarian piece of equipment. You climb it at your peril, in full knowledge of the precariousness of your situation. Hence the phrase "easy as falling off a ladder". Jacob's ladder is symbolic of the kind of risk that the Bible envisages as being unavoidable in a living relationship with God. Many a biblical character could testify to the risky nature of their faith in God.

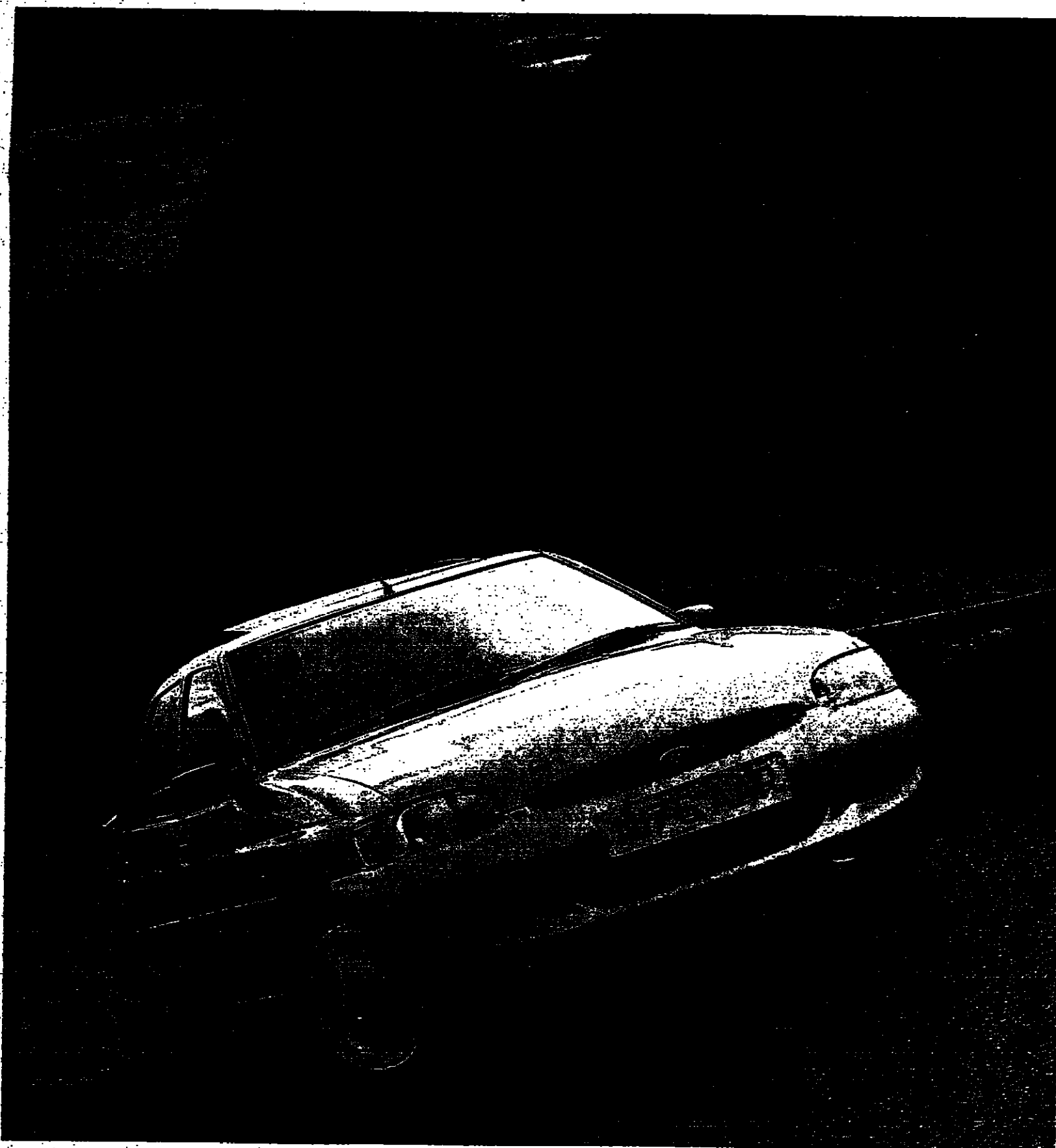
They were often called to do dangerous and difficult things for which they felt

totally inadequate. But when they expressed their reluctance to accept the challenge, they were told not to argue, just to obey. In their heart they knew that God was urging them to take the reckless step of getting on with it. They had no idea what would be the outcome. They could take it in faith only one step at a time. But then, how else can you climb a ladder?

Jacob seems to have interpreted his dream as good news. It imparted the comforting truth that God is nearer to us than we sometimes think, and that there is no outward place, or inward condition, which is as God-forsaken as we imagine. His dream is also a reminder that faith is a precarious business. In my experience, you do not progress by leaps and bounds. It is more of a gradual climb, rung after risky rung. God is not waiting for us at the top of the stairs, but at the top of the ladder.

□ The Rev Barry Overend, vicar of St Chad's, Far Headingley, Leeds, is *Times Preacher of the Year 1995*.

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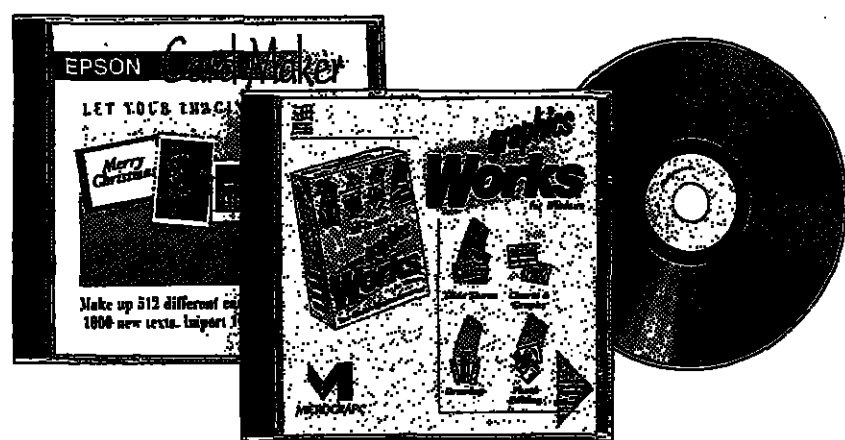
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Socialists join poll rivals in threat to Eta

By EDWARD OWEN
IN MADRID AND
OUR FOREIGN STAFF

SPAIN'S ruling Socialists, facing defeat in the general election on March 3, announced yesterday that the political wing of the Basque Eta guerrilla group might be declared illegal.

The Government, which is trailing the conservative Popular Party in the polls, had announced hours earlier that it was asking prosecutors to file charges against leaders of the Herri Batasuna group for supporting terrorism.

"I think there are legal grounds to act on the basis of collaboration with terrorism," Felipe González, the Prime Minister, told state television.

The Socialist initiative marked the launch of campaigning and came on the heels of proposals by the Popular Party (PP), led by José María Aznar, to crack down on Basque separatists who advocate violence. The PP is predicted to achieve its first election victory.

"Eta and its supporters have reason to be worried, because we are going to finish with them," Señor Aznar said as he opened his campaign in the southern

port of Cádiz yesterday. He said the PP would ensure that all Eta prisoners complete their full prison terms.

The announcements followed the murder by Eta on Wednesday of Francisco Tomás y Valiente, a widely respected law professor who served for six years as head of Spain's constitutional court.

The killing, the second in less than two weeks, produced widespread public anger. Thousands of students and citizens paused in silent protest on Thursday as the murdered professor was buried, with Señor González and Cabinet ministers in attendance.

PACO TORRENTE



José María Aznar, the Spanish conservative leader, who is strongly favoured to win next month's election

Spain's leader in waiting spells out EMU doubts

THE move to monetary union could divide Europe if it is not launched with a consensus of Britain and the four other big EU members, says José María Aznar, the centre-right politician who is the strong favourite to become Spain's Prime Minister next month.

Señor Aznar made clear, in an interview with *The Times*, that under his leadership Spain would assert its interests forcefully within the EU and that he would keep an open mind on Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). His stance marks a distinct shift from the Euro-enthusiasm of Felipe González, the Socialist Prime Minister, who took Spain into the EU in 1986.

Señor Aznar's Partido Popular (PP) has raised its lead to ten points over the Socialists in opinion polls ahead of the March 3 election. Although Señor González, weary of power and discredited by scandal in his administration, could scrape back, the big question is whether Señor Aznar will win an outright majority or be forced to seek accommodation with the prickly Catalan and Basque nationalist parties.

With victory in reach, the former tax inspector with a bland style that draws comparisons with John Major is doing nothing to upset voters who have qualms about the return of the Right two decades after the death of Franco.

Although he professes himself a free-marketier, his plans to tackle Spain's disastrous 23 per cent level of unemployment do not include cutting the welfare system set up by the Socialists or dismantling the rigid labour laws. Señor Aznar, 42, insists his is the "party of the centre". His team, he says, consists of both Christian Democrats and "neo-liberals" like himself. The far Right, used by the Socialists as a bogey, is ancient history, he says. "Spain has overcome its past. When the previous regime ended, we were all students."

According to the PP's supporters, Spain's "second transition", as they call the anticipated change of government, will mark a coming of age in which it can shed the



Spain has overcome Franco's legacy and is ready for a new transition, the man tipped to win next month's election tells Charles Bremner

plumage of fledgling democracy. The outline of this more self-confident Spain emerges from conversation with Señor Aznar at the PP's offices, a place buzzing with young party workers who could have come from the Clinton campaign of 1992.

While he was speaking, a gunman from Eta, the Basque guerrilla group, murdered an eminent jurist at Madrid's main university. A PP government would be expected to crack down harder on Eta, which last year came close to killing Señor Aznar in a bomb attack. His cool behaviour after the explosion won him widespread admiration.

While professing himself committed to the objective of EMU, Señor Aznar depicts Spain as one of the big powers and breaches the taboo which bars continental leaders from uttering doubt over the fate of monetary union.

"It seems absolutely absurd that something as important as monetary union should not be debated among all the countries. We are committed to the European Union... but I believe the nations that make the most transcendental decisions are four or five essential historic nations. France, Germany, Britain, Spain and Italy... No great process in Europe can get on the road without the basic consensus or common accord of these countries."

Señor Aznar would not be drawn on the merits of a delay, something supported by many in Spain, since the country is given little chance of meeting the Maastricht convergence criteria. An Aznar government would keep up the effort to meet the test, but he says he would leave a decision until later.

This is guaranteed to raise eyebrows in Brussels because the Maastricht treaty allows only Britain to decide for itself whether to join EMU. Señor

Aznar had high praise for Miguel Boyer, the former Socialist Finance Minister and one of the architects of monetary union, who has just made waves with an outburst against EMU and thrown in his lot with the PP.

The party leader is also worried about the plan to bring in new EU members from Eastern Europe. Under present arrangements, he says, Spain would carry the burden of bailing out the former Communist countries. An Aznar government would also side with Britain in its refusal to give up the veto in the EU's foreign and defence policies.

On Gibraltar, which has long bedevilled ties between London and Madrid, Señor Aznar says he does not exclude raising the pressure on the

frontier. Like previous governments, he will not allow the Gibraltarians to take part in Anglo-Spanish negotiations. "There are good relations but no trust" between Spain and Britain over the issue, he said.

Britain remains something of a model when it comes to the PP's plans for trimming waste and mismanagement in the bureaucracy and for privatisation. He is banking, he says, on a German-style pact involving unions, employers and the government. Only in the area of fraud and corruption will he be ferocious.

He blanches at any comparison with the election promises of Jacques Chirac in France last year. "I am the opposite. I feel much more in tune with what has come about in Germany," he says.

He compares himself with Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, in another department — the lack of a strong public personality, which is often held to be his biggest handicap. Spain has had enough of charisma, with Señor González, he says.

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Iranians held as Nato raids Bosnia 'terrorist' base

FROM STACY SULLIVAN IN SARAJEVO

NATO forces claimed yesterday to have raided a terrorist training camp 20 miles west of Sarajevo, capturing 11 men and an arsenal of handguns, sniper rifles, rocket launchers, assault rifles and bombs. Disguised as children's toys.

The Bosnian Government, however, denied the allegation, and said the facility was a training school for "anti-terrorist units" specialising in the arrest of war criminals.

"We have never been accused of any form of terrorism. We have been known throughout the world as victims of terrorism, rather than those who organise it," said Mirza Hefric, the Bosnian government spokesman.

"This allegation is very hurtful."

Nato officials said they believed three of the men held were Iranians because they were carrying documents written in Farsi and had opened Air Iran tickets to Tehran. Eight others are Bosnian members of the Interior Ministry who were allegedly being trained by the Iranians to make terrorist bombs and conduct other terrorist acts.

Government officials said the camp, in a former ski centre near Pajnica, was an intelligence training facility that had foreign instructors before and during the war. The raid was carried out by about 250 American and French troops

backed by tanks and helicopters on Thursday. Nato officials refused to elaborate on what prompted the raid, saying only that troops around the area had witnessed "suspicious activity".

On Thursday night, Bosnia's President Izetbegovic said the camp was an old intelligence training facility that was in the process of being shut down. But Admiral Leighton Smith, the American Commander of Nato forces in Bosnia, said: "No one can escape the obvious, that this is a terrorist training activity going on in this building and it has direct association with the people in the Government."

The Dayton agreement forbids the presence of foreign forces in Bosnia and stipulated that they had to leave the country by January 19.

The presence of "Mujahidin" forces in Bosnia has long concerned the American State Department, which feared that hostile forces could use Bosnia as a launching pad for attacks against Western troops.

The United Nations estimated that there were once up to 3,000 Islamic volunteers from Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Egypt aiding the out-gunned Bosnian Army. However, Nato officials reported that all foreign fighters had left the country by the end of last month.

Nato officials said the camp contained an extensive arsenal of explosive devices built into plastic toys including a car, helicopter and ice cream cone. Instructions found indicated that special government forces were being trained to hit civilians, as well military targets.

However, Nato said there was no evidence that terrorist operations were being conducted from the site.

"There is no complaint that an intelligence school was run here but methods of terrorism and kidnapping which obviously violate international accords are our great concerns," an American officer said.

Leading article, page 23

Suspects go free as troops look on

BY STACY SULLIVAN

NATO peacekeepers in Bosnia are mandated to detain suspected war criminals if they come across them under the Dayton agreement, but it appears no-one told them about their obligation.

A run through any of Nato checkpoints along the so-called zone of separation confirms that the troops have not been given any information about the 52 suspected war criminals indicted by the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague. Most had not even heard of Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, or General Ratko Mladic, his military counterpart, both indicted over war crimes.

When shown a colour photograph of Dr Karadzic, American troops at checkpoints shrugged their shoulders. "Looks famil-

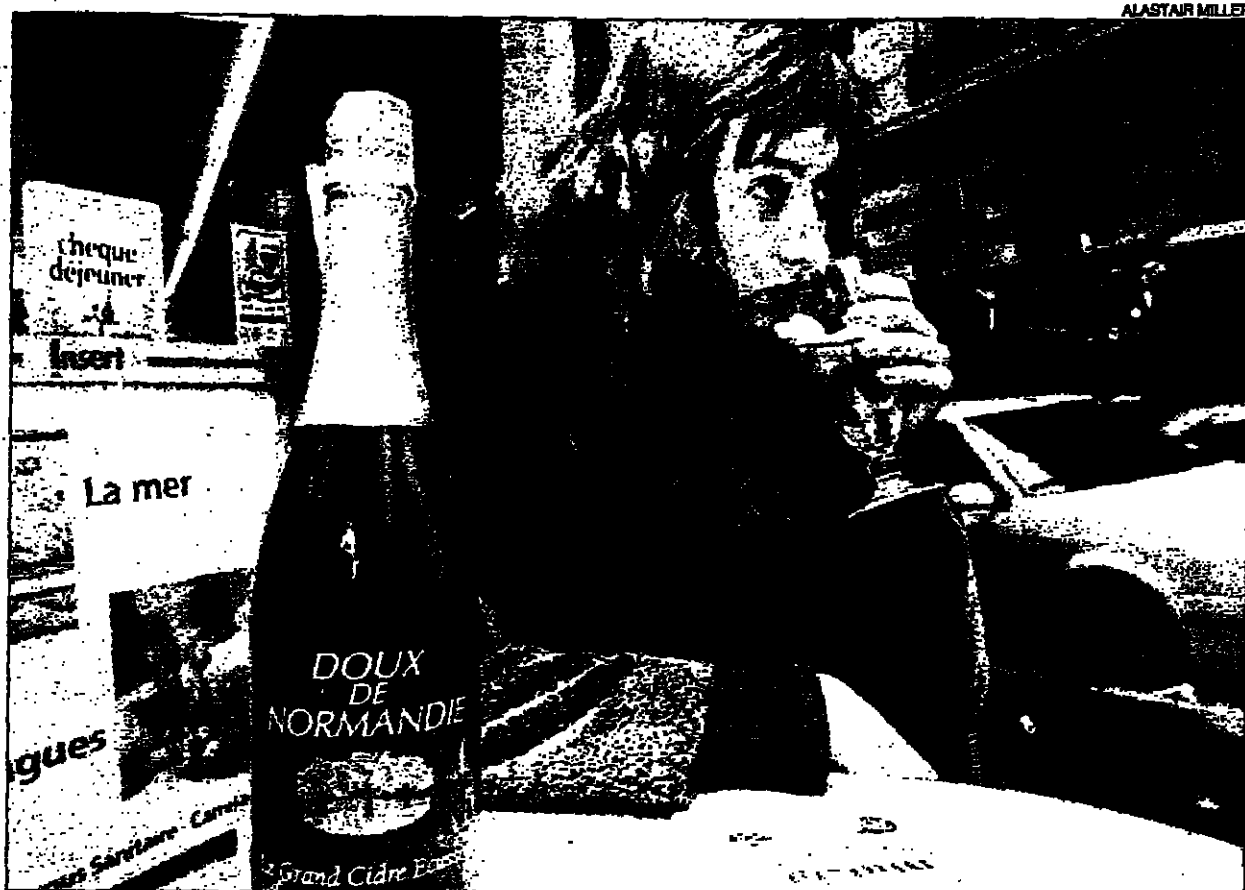


Karadzic: a face that went unrecognised

iar," said a private manning a checkpoint at the border town of Capard. When informed of who was in the photograph, the private said he did not know he had a mandate to detain the fugitive.

International mediators want Nato troops to take a more active role over war criminals after the reports that Mr Karadzic was able to drive through Nato checkpoints undetected.

William Perry, US Defence Secretary, has promised "more information" would be given to troops to help them to detain suspected war criminals.



Normandy cider, one of two French ciders that now qualify for the coveted Appellation contrôlée badge of quality

Elite wine club admits humble cider

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

ONLY the best French wines may describe themselves as *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*, or AOC, but last week the humble cider, traditional beverage of the French peasantry, was admitted to this exclusive club.

Philippe Vasseur, French Minister of Agriculture, announced on Thursday that just two types of cider, one from the Auge region in Normandy and the other from Cornouaille in Brittany, could henceforth qualify for the coveted AOC badge of quality. Such wines must meet certain strict standards and are guaranteed

to come from the area and vineyard stated on the label. "This double recognition is a major trump for cider everywhere since it enlarges the range of products offered to consumers while rewarding the know-how and expertise of the producers," M Vasseur said.

There are some 150 cider-makers in the Auge and Cornouaille regions, producing just 1 per cent of France's total output of cider.

The two areas declared AOC cider regions were selected because of their highly distinctive flavours, according

to the Institut National d'Appellation Contrôlée in Paris. Gérard Martineau, the institute's cider expert, waxed lyrical when describing the two ciders. The Auge was "a persistent little cider", he said, with a "hint of citrus fruits, limes and apples". He described the Cornouaille as a more "animal" cider. "The bitterness is more pronounced, while the bouquet is closer to butter and leather."

"These are probably the two most famous ciders in France. They have been awarded the AOC because they have characteristics, linked to the quality of the soil, that would be impossible to produce in any other region," Jacques Gautier of the institute said.

Unlike mass-produced ciders which are given their fizz in a factory, the AOC ciders go through a second fermentation process in the bottle.

"It's a good thing to guarantee the quality of ciders. In fact it's far too late in coming," Jacques Dupont, wine critic for *Le Point* magazine, said. "Already the variety of types of apple used in cider making has been reduced and many great ciders have disappeared."

Pope signals change in rules for conclave cardinals

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

ROMAN Catholic cardinals will have to undergo stringent medical tests before they go into conclave to elect the next Pope, and they will sleep in a luxury Vatican hotel instead of traditionally spartan cells under changes in the succession rules being promulgated by the Pope.

The Pope is also believed to be considering relaxing the rules governing cardinals talking to reporters

during conclaves. Cardinals are prohibited under pain of excommunication from speaking to any outsider about the deliberations. However, the Pope may allow cardinals to describe the general atmosphere during the sessions to reporters, but not details on the voting.

In an apostolic letter on future conclaves to be issued by the 75-year-old Pope over the next few months, he will recommend that all the cardinals provide a doctor's certificate to ensure that they are in good health, according

to Vatican sources in *Il Messaggero*. The procedure is designed to avoid a repeat of the election of Pope John Paul I, who died only 33 days after his election in 1978, prompting speculation that he had been murdered.

The Pope also has decided to relax the traditional physical isolation. The cardinals will be allowed to sleep in a specially built luxury hotel within the Vatican City. In the past conclavists had to sleep in cramped and uncomfortable *stanzoni*, or monastic-style cells in the Apostolic Palace. The use of the

hotel is sure to enrage environmentalists, who opposed its construction over the past four years on the ground that the building obscured a view of the dome.

Voting will continue to take place in the Sistine Chapel. Officials said that the Pope had no plans to change the system by which cardinals signalled to the crowd in St Peter's Square the outcome: black smoke meaning they had failed to elect a Pope and white smoke signifying one of their number was the new incumbent.

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Ill omens plague Year of the Rat

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY IN HONG KONG

THE natural and man-made disasters rocking China as it enters the Year of the Rat, which begins on Monday, are seen by many Chinese as auguries that their Government has lost its legitimacy.

Even Western-educated Hong Kong intellectuals confess themselves shaken by recent dark happenings in a season when people give presents of flowering plants and fruit symbolising hope, life and the coming of spring.

In traditional theory, when the empire was ruled badly, it was said to have lost the Mandate of Heaven and the people would rebel. The sign of this loss was a series of strange disasters.

The Chinese Government, never eager to report bad news, at this season becomes especially careful about what it reveals. Only yesterday it was announced in *Wen Wei Po*, a Peking-backed Hong Kong newspaper, that 23 people died in a gale off the southeast coast.

The explosion of the Long March rocket and its satellite this week was not only a financial disaster for China, which had been counting on cheap satellite

launches to attract foreign customers, but a human one as well, resulting in somewhere between a handful of deaths and many more — according to foreigners near the scene — as flaming debris and poisonous gas spread over an agricultural region in the south-west of the country.

The television-watching public was shielded from a view of the flaming rocket hurtling into the ground, and heard only control room technicians gasping: "It's finished." Yesterday's Chinese newspapers carried only minimal stories. There was a similar lack of coverage in January 1995 when another Long March rocket disintegrated on lift-off.

All satellite launches were suspended after the latest accident, the China Aerospace Corporation said yesterday. "There were some victims, including among the space centre personnel," it said. A local official said there were four deaths and that some people had been hurt by fumes.

Earlier this month an earthquake measuring seven on the Richter scale devastated a vast area near the Tibetan border, killing more than 300 people and

injuring at least 16,000. Most of the survivors are still camping in freezing weather. In this case the authorities issued a call for international help.

Last month a house storing 20 tonnes of illegal dynamite blew up in Hunan, Mao's home province, killing 121 people.

Two weeks ago, Li Piyao, a senior official of the National People's Congress, was killed when he interrupted a burglary carried out by a guard at his official residence. Li came from a family so distinguished that in 1949 his father stood near Mao when he proclaimed the People's Republic.

This year has an additional fateful characteristic. It is an "extra-August" year, which means an additional month has been added to balance the lunar calendar. Such years may be auspicious or catastrophic. Another such year was 1976, when Mao died and China's worst earthquake, this century, destroyed the city of Tangshan. In 1911 the last dynasty fell. This year the life of Deng Xiaoping, the 91-year-old senior leader, has been drawing to a close.



Two gold rats, one modelled on the Statue of Liberty, go on sale at a Hong Kong jewellers for about £520 each to mark the Year of the Rat

China is warned Japan may rearm if Taiwan raided

FROM PEREGRINE HUDSON IN TOKYO

JAPAN will rearm if China attacks Taiwan, according to a former senior American defence official.

Charles Freeman, Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, said yesterday he had told Chinese officials that, if the Chinese attacked Taiwan, Japan would rearm, whether the Americans intervened or not and whatever the outcome of the fighting.

"If we decide not to intervene, there will be many people in Japan who see this as a default on American responsibility to manage the strategic perimeter of Japan, and there will be a lot of people and a lot of pressure demanding that Japan acquire the capability to do this by itself without the United States," he said.

"Conversely, if the US decides to intervene, then we have to use bases in Japan to do it. This means that the Japanese Government has to choose between good relations with China and its alliance with the US."

"I think any Japanese Government would choose the US, but I also think that no Japanese Government would

be comfortable being put in this position by a foreigner. There would be pressure for Japan to acquire its own military capabilities, so that foreigners could not again put Japan in this kind of unfavourable position."

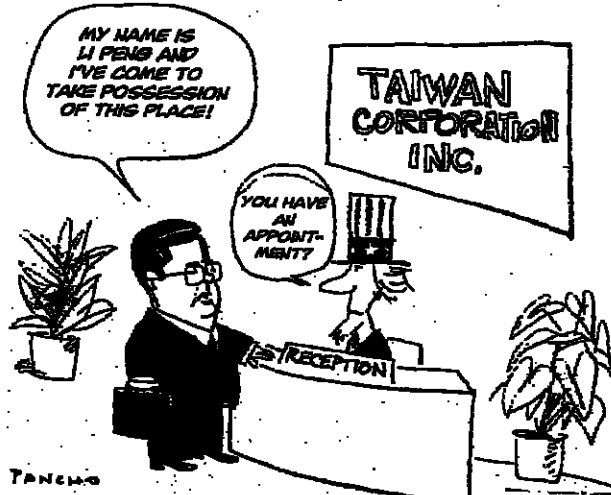
However, a senior official of the Liberal Democratic Party has dismissed the threat to Taiwan as relatively unimportant and offered a different perspective on future relations with China.

"If China becomes too overbearing, what leverage do we have? It won't be military leverage or money, but technology — and whether we will be generous enough to offer technology. Basic technology power in Asia is our target."

□ Tokyo linked: Japan has informed South Korea that its military exercise off disputed islands runs counter to the spirit of an earlier meeting between Yukio Ikeda, Japan's Foreign Minister, and Kim Tae Jin, South Korean Ambassador, a Foreign Ministry official said.

Sadayuki Hayashi, the Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister, voiced Tokyo's displeasure in a telephone call to Mr Kim. (AFP)

CARTOONISTS & WRITERS SYNDICATE



How the threat to Taiwan was seen by *Le Monde*

Bangladesh poll stirs new protests

Dhaka: The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) won an expected easy victory yesterday after general elections. But boycotting opposition leaders dismissed the vote and threatened fresh action to paralyse the country.

Partial poll results showed that the BNP of Begum Khalida Zia, the Prime Minister, had won 167 out of 300 parliamentary seats, with one seat going to an independent candidate.

As the country emerged from a three-day shutdown called to protest against the vote, opposition leaders threatened yet another strike in the poverty-stricken nation which has been repeatedly disrupted by stoppages since 1994.

Thursday's vote was accompanied by widespread violence. At least 16 people were killed and 500 wounded; poll officials were attacked, ballot papers stolen and voting centres set ablaze. (Reuters)

Mohajirs shot dead by police

Karachi: Eight activists of the ethnic Mohajir National Movement were shot dead and two others wounded in a gun battle, Pakistani police reported yesterday.

"They were terrorists and one of them, Hasan Akhter, was wanted in over 40 criminal cases," police said. The shootout began when police raided a house used as the movement's hideout in the western Orangi Town area.

Akhter's weeping mother said at the hospital where the bodies were taken that her son and his friends had been shot as they slept. "The policemen broke open the door and sprayed bullets on my sleeping children."

The Mohajirs have called a general strike for today in protest at the killing of four of its activists by police on Thursday. Police said they had died in a gunfight. The movement claimed that police arrested the four and then shot them in cold blood. (Reuters)



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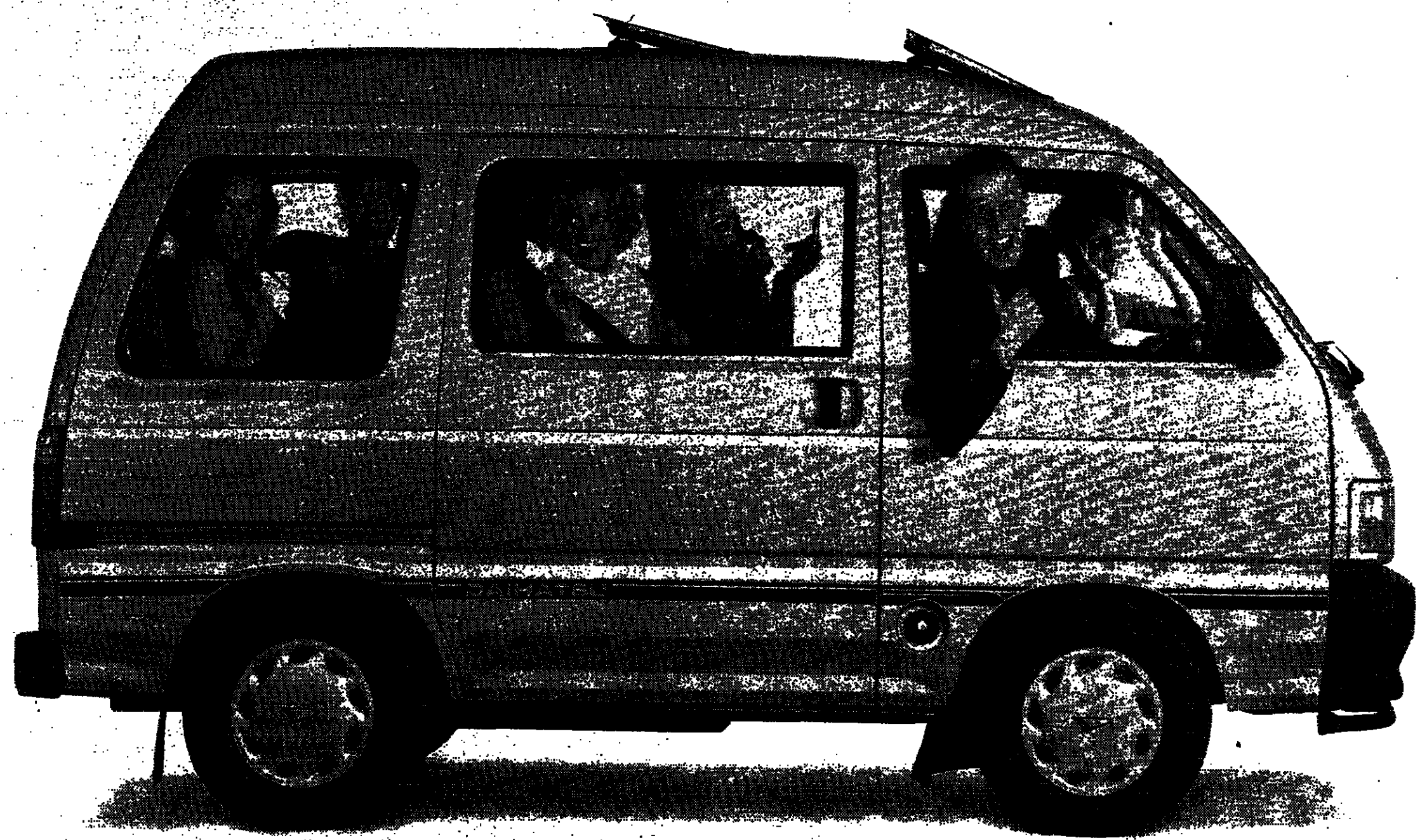
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Whitewater factor drags Republican wives into media gauntlet



Mrs Dole: accused of having enjoyed financial gains

FROM TOM RHODES
IN WASHINGTON

THERE was a time when spouses of presidential candidates led a surrogate existence, appearing before tiny crowds in remote coffee shops, courting minor dignitaries and talking to small-town newspapers.

Tramping through the snows of New Hampshire this week, that was a role Honey, the wife of Lamar Alexander, the former Tennessee Governor, has been eager to resuscitate. But as she left the safety of offices and church halls in the Granite State, Mrs Alexander soon ran into the inevitable barrage of questions about her business deal-

ings and how she compared herself to Hillary Clinton.

Mrs Clinton's early role as policy adviser to the Administration and her ties to the Whitewater scandal have made the "spouse" card a critical factor.

Scrutiny has focused on Elizabeth Dole, wife of Robert Dole, the Senate Majority Leader from Kansas, and Mrs Alexander, both of whom had successful careers before any declaration was made. Mrs Dole was a former Secretary of Labour and of Transportation in separate Cabinets, and is president of the American Red Cross.

She has been the subject of a less than flattering article in the *New*

Yorker which suggested that she had benefited financially from special treatment because of the political activities of her husband. The controversy centres on her personal investments, which were placed in a blind trust while she served in government. According to the magazine, Mrs Dole was given special treatment several times. On one occasion she was able to recoup an initial investment of \$250,000 (£162,000) and \$71,000 in interest from an insolvent company.

But for Mrs Alexander, director of a childcare business and former board member of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, this has been something of a baptism of fire.

She invested \$5,000 in a prison management firm founded by an associate of her husband. After the company proposed to take over the Tennessee prison system, Mrs Alexander traded shares for insurance stock she later sold for \$142,000.

Sabrina Forbes, a minister's daughter who stays at home and takes care of five children, has remained unscathed by such publicity despite a brief foray as the protagonist in advertisements for her husband, Steve Forbes, the multimillionaire publisher.

Shelley Buchanan, the silent and adoring wife of the first and second president, has seen too much to wish for a profile. She spent three seasons

as an assistant to Richard Nixon on the campaign trail, and when he became President in 1968 she settled into a job as receptionist in the White House.

"I did that for six years," she said. "If you wanted to see the President or any of his senior staff, you had to see me first."

Studied silence makes her the ideal foil to Pat Buchanan and his fiery message. It is also a shrewd tactic by the Buchanan camp to protect her.

Mrs Alexander perhaps should take a lesson from the woman who witnessed Watergate, or she may find her image as a second Mrs Clinton remains.

Rifkind reassures Greece

London: Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, has telephoned Theodoros Pangalos, his Greek counterpart, to assure him Britain was not favouring Turkey or taking an anti-Greek position in urging dialogue between the two countries over sovereignty in the Aegean (Michael Binyon writes).

Mr Pangalos had denounced statements issued after Mr Rifkind's meeting in London with Deniz Baykal, the Turkish Foreign Minister, which suggested that he had urged the two sides to negotiate over the sovereignty of Imia, a group of rocky islets claimed by both Ankara and Athens.

Portuguese see the light

Lisbon: After four years of dark mornings, Portugal is to abandon Central European Time and realign its clocks with Britain and Ireland. Portugal will not move its clocks forward on March 31, when most of its European Union partners switch to summer time, and so be on the equivalent of British Summer Time. In autumn clocks switch back to GMT. The change to Central European Time put Lisbon, mainland Europe's westernmost capital, in the same time zone as Vienna, Prague and Budapest. (AP)

Palestinians to launch airline

Jerusalem: The Palestinian Authority is to launch its own airline (Ross Dunn writes). Pierre Jeanniot, director-general of the International Air Transport Association, said he expected flights between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to start this summer. Clearance for international routes would come later. Mr Jeanniot said crew were being trained. This week The Netherlands donated two planes. Other countries are likely to follow.

New threat to tobacco giant

Los Angeles: The American tobacco industry is facing a new legal threat from airline crews exposed to secondhand smoking (Giles Whittell writes). An appeals court has ruled that 60,000 flight attendants can join the lawsuit of a stewardess who is suing Philip Morris, the tobacco giant, for giving her lung cancer although she has never smoked.

Tax burden

Paris: A retired businessman paid 3.7 million francs (about £500,000) in fines and back tax in more than 22 tonnes of one franc coins, delivered to a tax office in 900 bags by four rented armoured vans. (AFP)

Buchanan packs punches to pull level with Dole

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

THE unthinkable is becoming daily more likely. Pat Buchanan, the right-wing populist, could beat Robert Dole in next Tuesday's critical New Hampshire primary and throw the race for the Republican presidential nomination into disarray.

Mr Buchanan, a former amateur boxer, punched hardest and to best effect in a high-stakes televised debate on Thursday night that became an ugly free-for-all, and yesterday's polls showed that the broadcaster had drawn level with Mr Dole, the ostensible front-runner.

Mr Buchanan has cornered the steerable conservative vote while Lamar Alexander, the former Tennessee Governor, is now splitting Mr Dole's mainstream support. Polls say that his followers are more likely than Mr Dole's to turn out on the day. He alone brings real passion and conviction to the race, and his protectionist message clearly resonates at a time of widespread economic insecurity.

Mr Buchanan won the Louisiana caucuses and nearly defeated Mr Dole in Iowa last week. President Clinton's campaign officials are ecstatic at his New Hampshire surge. Republican elders are appalled at the idea of a nominee even more extreme than the disastrous Barry Goldwater in 1964, but the more the Establishment attacks Mr Buchanan, the more it fuels his insurgency.

Whatever the merits of his ideas, Mr Buchanan is a brilliant television performer, and used his professional training to full effect in Thursday's eight-man debate.

Standing next to Mr Dole, he excoriated the veteran Senate leader for airing advertisements labelling him an "extremist — the cuss word of the Establishment". He continued: "If I am an extremist, why are you pirating my ideas and parroting my rhetoric? Where did you get that idea for the cultural war for the soul of America? Where did you get this other idea about corporate greed? I don't think you can call me an extremist when you've become a pretty good echo of Pat Buchanan."

Mr Dole, who had hoped to remain aloof and presidential, turned to Mr Buchanan and remarked: "Bad day or something?" He mocked what he called "Pat's isolationist kick", and accused him of wanting to "build a fence round America". But Mr Buchanan pleaded "guilty" to wanting to protect American workers' jobs.

He damned the free trade agreements Mr Dole has shepherded through Congress, saying they shipped jobs abroad and depressed wages at home. He attacked Mr Dole's support for a \$50 billion (£32 billion) Mexican

bail-out, which was designed, he said, to rescue the senator's Wall Street friends.

Mr Alexander, who insists he is the only viable alternative to Mr Dole, also rounded on the 72-year-old senator, saying he was amazed he had let his handlers air such vicious advertisements against fellow Republicans.

But Mr Alexander was attacked by Steve Forbes, the multimillionaire publisher who has soared and plummeted like a modern-day Icarus. He accused Mr Alexander of turning \$20,000 into \$1.9 million through "various scams" while Tennessee's Governor. Mr Alexander said he was proud of his successful capitalism, which was public knowledge because he had released his tax returns.

"Steve, why don't you issue your tax returns?" he shot back. A CNN post-debate poll showed 26 per cent of likely New Hampshire voters backing Mr Buchanan, with Mr Dole on 23, Mr Alexander 18, and Mr Forbes 15. A daily *Boston Globe* poll showed Mr Dole dropping to 22, Mr Buchanan rising to 25, Mr Alexander and Mr Forbes both on 14. A *New York Post* poll showed Mr Dole and Mr Buchanan both on 21, with Mr Alexander and Mr Forbes on 15.

Peter Stothard, Weekend

Rio police to guard carnival tourists

FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI
IN RIO DE JANEIRO

MARIA LUZIA DA SILVA has been waiting all year for the next four days of Rio Carnival revelry.

She will strap on pink high heels, adorn her scantily clad body with glittering accessories, and dance to vibrant, tropical sambas. Senhora da Silva has saved for months from her meagre salary as a shop assistant to buy the £160 costume for the flamboyant procession choreographed by the Mangueira Samba School, one of 20 competing for a prize for best song and show.

"I will dance until I drop. This will be the biggest moment for me. It will be a feeling of sheer exhilaration," said the 20-year-old *passista* (carnival procession dancer).

More than 100,000 people and hundreds of richly adorned mobile stages will cram the wide avenue in the Sambadrome, a stadium that has become the centre of the carnival. Each school, many run by Mafia-like families who also control an illegal gambling game played on Rio street corners, spends at least £1 million to put on its show.

A good seat can cost £100, and for most residents this is something only tourists can afford. Many leave the city for the four-day holiday and let the visitors take over. "Our carnival has become a display for tourists happy to pay the hefty prices. It is no longer the street party which it once was," Maria Augusta Rodrigues, a veteran choreographer, said.



Milton Cunha, the artistic director of the Beija-Flor samba school, with a giant baby, one of hundreds of figures featuring in the Rio carnival which starts today

To protect the show from crime, the city authorities have moved the party from the streets to the Sambadrome and have put on hundreds of air-conditioned coaches to transport people to the venue. More than 10,000 policemen

will surround the stadium to protect the tourists from pickpockets. Many residents argue, however, that the carnival has become flashier but is still the party of the year for all, where inhibitions are let loose and

people indulge in shameless hedonism. Carnival was an import from Portuguese colonists in the 18th century who put on yearly balls to mark a religious holiday, and then it was mixed with the traditions of freed African slaves.

Tennessee coma victim starts talking again after seven speechless years

FROM QUENTIN LETTS
IN NEW YORK

A MAN came out of a seven-year coma in a flurry of words, proceeded to talk coherently almost non-stop for 18 hours, and then lapsed back into silence as a result of a bout of pneumonia.

Gary Dockery, 42, a Tennessee policeman, originally entered his vegetative condition after being shot in September 1988. He had lain in hospital, speechless, to the despair

of family and friends who agonised over whether efforts should be made to keep him alive.

Inexplicably, Mr Dockery this week regained his power of speech. His sister, Lisa, while sitting by his bed at a hospital in Chattanooga, noticed an unusually alert look in the eyes which for more than seven years had betrayed little sign of life. "I am your sister," she said, not for a moment expecting a reply. "Uh-huh," mumbled Mr Dockery. Lisa exclaimed: "You're talking!" To

which her brother replied brightly: "I sure am."

The next day he talked and talked, asking about the President (Ronald Reagan) and a long list of friends, giving their full names. He knew the colour of his vehicle, the names and colours of his horses, recognised at once his sons, Colt and Shane, now aged 12 and 19, and pooh-poohed suggestions that he rest. The one thing he could not recall was his shooting, for which a man is serving a 37-year sentence.

Lisa Dockery summoned other members of the family, to whom Mr Dockery spoke as if not a day had passed. When Lisa telephoned her older brother, Dennis, she told him: "There's someone here who wants to talk to you." She then handed the phone to Gary who said: "Hey, buddy."

Dennis Dockery said afterwards: "I couldn't believe it. I started screaming my brother's name and told him I loved him." Such expressions of affection come uneasily to

Tennessee menfolk, and Gary said teasingly: "Me? You love me?"

His recovery then started to falter, owing to a bout of pneumonia which had begun before he recovered his speech. Yesterday he underwent a life-saving operation that drained infectious fluid from his lungs. He opened his eyes later and responded to questions by squeezing the hands of relatives at his bedside.

David Rankine, a neurologist treating Mr Dockery, said it was likely that his recovery would be

permanent. However, doctors are baffled by the way he burst back into conversation and say that he may not have been in a full coma. They said it was not possible to draw conclusions about other coma victims.

Dr Rankine said that when Mr Dockery started to speak it was as if someone had simply reinserted an electric plug, which powered his consciousness. Before he came round, Mr Dockery was receiving antibiotics.

Farrakhan calls on US to halt 'mass murder of Iraqis'

BY TOM RHODES

LOUIS FARRAKHAN, the controversial black activist, has made peace with another of his country's sworn enemies and accused America of inciting the "mass murder" of the Iraqi people.

In Baghdad this week to meet President Saddam Hussein, Mr Farrakhan denounced the United Nations sanctions imposed against Iraq after the Gulf War and attacked the insistence of Washington on maintaining the embargo. "Keeping them in place is a very wicked policy that must be stopped immediately," the Nation of Islam leader said after touring the Amiriyah shelter in which hundreds of civilians were said to have been killed in an American air raid.

"I will work nights and days, marshalling the moral force that I believe is in all the American people, to bring every pressure on our Government that the mass murder of the Iraqi people must cease."

His latest onslaught on America is likely to provoke a swift response from Washington, where Mr Farrakhan has already been branded a foreign agent. After visiting Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in Tripoli last month, Mr Farrakhan was reported to have accepted a \$1 billion (£640 million) donation from the Libyan leader to mobilise oppressed blacks in the United States and influence foreign policy.

The Justice Department has written a letter to Mr Farrakhan at his Chicago headquarters, warning him that he must register with the federal Government if he acts as an agent for Libya.

Mr Farrakhan's tour of the Middle East and Africa was undertaken ostensibly to increase the prestige and influence which his movement acquired after the "Million Man March" in Washington last October.

Meanwhile, as the State Department accused Mr Farrakhan of "cavorting with dictators" in Libya and Iran, a newspaper in Tehran this week quoted him as saying that God would give Muslims the honour of bringing down the United States. His next stop is Damascus.

Where do you get help from HM Treasury to avoid tax?

Always on Page 2 and in Weekend Money

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Farm

He did not consider that the Home Secretary was bound to give great detail of previous cases and the policies and practices of the third country. Here, however, he

had given nothing more than their opinion on the basis of his unexplained knowledge and previous experiences he had no reason to believe that the Convention would not be observed.

That such a detail it was almost impossible for the appellant to challenge or for the special adjudicator to assess what he said, no doubt bona fide, was believed to be the position. That really was more than the issue did require and that the appellant might well be right but was not self-evident on which that statement was based.

Despite some initial hesitation his Lordship had come to the same conclusion as Lord Justice Slynn, that there had been no evidence before the adjudicators on which they could independently be sat-

Solicitors: Param & Co., Colindale; Treasury Solicitor.

century •

was always in favour of proceeding inter partes unless there was real reason to believe that something of value to the investigation might be lost if that course was adopted.

If it was decided to proceed inter partes it would normally be appropriate to give notice of the applica-

tion not only to those from whom access was sought, in the present case the banks, but also to others who were obviously likely to be directly affected by the order, in the present case the suspects.

If the commissioners did not give them notice, they would soon learn of the application from their bank and the object of proceeding inter partes was best achieved if everyone who had a genuine interest in the proposed order heard before the order was made.

If in future the decision whether to proceed ex parte was approached in that way, namely on a case by case basis, the legitimate interests of individuals and of institutions against whom orders were made would be better protected, without hampering the commissioners' task of investigating suspected crime.

While it was unnecessary to dwell on criticisms of the wording

Mr Justice Forbes agreed.
Solicitors: Nicholson, Graham & Jones; Solicitor: Customs and Excise.

Always on Page 2 and
in Weekend Money

Always on Page 2 and
in Weekend Money



OPINION
Claudia quits, and so do Take That — but another celeb will be along in a minute



FILM
London prepares to celebrate the Lumières' first show by recreating the event

THE TIMES ARTS



RECORDING
John Mills in *Forever England*, and other new videos and CDs, reviewed in Weekend, page 8



ON MONDAY
Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress* in Cardiff: read Rodney Milnes's verdict on the new staging

It is never easy to feel sorry for people who are rich, good-looking and famous. And anyway, you don't want to hear about my problems. But let me alert you to a disease that wrecks the lives of hundreds of celebrities every year. Doctors call it *lumi absurdus deludus*: LAD syndrome for short. It happens like this. Somebody becomes very famous for possessing, say, gorgeous legs or perfectly-formed buttocks. They usually describe themselves as "actor" or "singer", but this fools nobody. They make buckets of dough. They lunch in Quags with Michael Winner. They ski at Klosters with Regie. They dance at Annabel's with Andrew Neil. The good life. But something gnaws at the soul. They are discontented. One day they utter the fateful words, probably to their publicist: "I want people to respect me for my art, not my body." If the publicist is truthful (what a crazy hypothesis!) the response would be: "Tough luck, dearie: perfect buttocks are

Fame is a trick you can't pull twice

all you've got." But he doesn't want to offend a meal-ticket that still has a few months to run. So he puts on a concerned voice, nods wisely, and purrs something like: "You're so right: the public would be amazed to know the true extent of your talent."

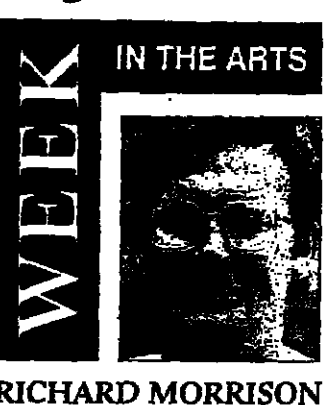
Then, if he is sharp, he begins an immediate search to pluck the next Mr Perfect Torso from the boiler-repair department of British Gas, or wherever. Because he, too, knows that once LAD syndrome hits a celebrity, it is incurable.

These sad thoughts are prompted by the shocking news that Take That, the pop group loved to bits by the toadying classes, have split up. Whole forests have died so that normally sane journalists can analyse the reasons behind the break. But we know why, don't we? LAD syndrome has struck.

Four pretty boys have got ideas above their station. They have sensed that there is more to music than getting pre-pubescent girls bewitched, bothered and bewildered. And indeed there is. The Wigmore Hall beckons.

But for the Take That boys the quest to find deeper meaning will almost certainly lead to instant and permanent media oblivion. Already a million little girls' bedrooms across Britain have been redecorated with posters of Boyzone. With the thoroughness of a Stalinist purge all traces of Take That have been erased. They are yesterday's pectorals.

Claudia Schiffer, the world's highest paid model, also announced this week that she is quitting the catwalk. She, too, says that she wants to develop the part that Versace never reaches — her



RICHARD MORRISON
brain. Well, she's a bright lady. But famous? For about another three minutes, if she's lucky. The problem lies with us, the general public. Our mundane lives

are uncertain and muddled. So in our fantasies we want our dreamboats to be clear-cut and simple. We need to know where we stand with them. We want to reverse types, not real people. And if our heroes deviate from type, they must be replaced. Otherwise the fantasy is distorted.

The most astute celebrities realise this. "There are two reasons why I'm in show business," Betty Grable once remarked, with delightful candour. "I'm standing on both of them." Such pragmatic survivors ruthlessly eliminate from their public lives anything that contravenes their image. "Remember," Cecil B. De Mille once advised a young starlet, "never go across the alley even to dump garbage unless you are dressed to the teeth."

Look at Ronald Reagan's career:

one seamless persona impeccably sustained from Hollywood to the White House. Or consider Joan Collins's magnificent performance in court this week. Superb! She could have been on the set of *Dynasty*. Win or lose, she was determined to fulfil the one rule of celebrity survival: stay in character.

Compare that with the unhappy case of the young jazz performer Harry Connick Jr. He came to fame as the "new Sinatra". Fans flocked to acclaim him. Then he grew restless. LAD syndrome struck. He wanted to "express his individuality", perform his own material. It was good stuff, too. But the same fans walked out in droves. He was no longer the kind of musical hero they needed.

Of course the greatest artists do manage to effect momentous changes in their creative personalities and still grip their public. Vivaldi may have written, as the musical wags have it, "not 600 concertos, but one concerto 600 times". But Stravinsky and Picasso were like chameleons, inventing themselves afresh time and time again. Such was the force of their art that they compelled attention.

That is the difference, though, between towering genius and commonplace celebrity. And in show business, celebrity is as tenuously linked to genius as expediency is to morality in the political arena. Which, translated into plain English, means that there's an awful lot of hogwash around.

But you will have to excuse me now. I hear that Gauthier is looking for a new male supermodel, and colleagues assure me that the public would be amazed to know the true extent of my physical allure. I'm ready for my close-up, Lord Lichfield.

A century of Lumière fantastic

David Robinson reports on the celebrations in Bradford and London of 100 years of cinema

One hundred years ago next week, the Lumière cinematographe arrived in London. The event is to be commemorated in style in the very location where the first shows took place, the Regent Street Polytechnic — today part of the University of Westminster.

The old Poly was the ideal place to demonstrate such a scientific novelty. The apogee of those uniquely Victorian institutions dedicated to popular education and the encouragement of scientific discovery, it was established in 1838. Its particular glory was its magic-lantern entertainments. The projectors were the most elaborate ever devised, with sophisticated mechanisms for dissolving and superimposing images, and for giving the illusion of movement. The slides were painted by talented artists, and special lantern presentations, such as the Christmas pantomimes and a lecture on the Crimean War, were reviewed in the theatrical columns of newspapers.

On Thursday February 20, 1896, a show was held for the press in the Great Hall; and on the Friday public screenings began, every hour from 2pm to 10pm. The programme consisted of ten or 12 films selected from a larger repertoire, with *Arrival of a Train* and *Baby's Breakfast* the favourites. Only 54 people attended on the opening day, which is perhaps why the shows were moved into the Poly's smaller Marlborough Hall after three days.

Business soon picked up, however, and on March 9 the shows moved to the Empire, Leicester Square — where films are still shown today.

The Poly celebrations begin on Monday with a presentation of a Victorian magic-lantern entertainment. On Tuesday, the Prince of Wales will attend a recreation of the original Lumière show of 1896, and the following day the public will be able to see the same programme for the original 1896 admission price of one shilling (5p).

While London celebrates the French pioneers, the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television in Bradford proclaims British achievement with its ambitiously staged exhibition *Magic Behind the Screen — A Century of British Cinema*. The British pioneers Birt Acres and Robert W. Paul, who were neck and neck with the Lumières — and even ahead of them, as the first cinematographers to film topical events (the Boat Race and the Derby of 1895) — are given due prominence.

The Bradford exhibition, which runs until June 23, goes on to recall later triumphs of British cinema, including Ealing and Hammer, coming up to date with costumes from Merchant-Ivory features and the Mig 29 from Goldeneye.

The National Film Archive and the National Film Theatre collaborate on a notable centenary venture. The archive's entire holdings of Victorian films, 600 titles, all made before the end of 1900, will be screened in a series of shows each Wednesday throughout February and March.

The era may be remote, with its horse-drawn traffic, long skirts and silk hats, military



Time machine: the Lumière cinematographe, and (right) the Regent Street Polytechnic, site of the first shows



Time machine: the Lumière cinematographe, and (right) the Regent Street Polytechnic, site of the first shows

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

SUSAN PARRY

Profession: Singer, mezzo.

What makes her stand out? Besides being off tall, Parry is singing Wagner for the ENO at the uncommonly young age of 32. She is Brangäne, commonly played by sopranos, in David Alden's new and hugely acclaimed *Tristan and Isolde*.

The critics on Parry: She has been greeted as a performer of deep intensity, a Brangäne "invested with the burden of Isolde's anguish".

Parry on the part: "It's a very demanding, energetic production. I look angst-ridden from beginning to end."



Ancestors in the arts? Not at all. Her Welsh father worked in the ball-bearing industry. But her mother had a voice. She turned down a job with the Black and White Minstrels. Parry's infant school teacher, believing her pupil might be musical, dedicated her evenings to teaching her the violin. Then the county music advisor spotted her talent on a school visit. By ten, Parry was attending London's Trinity College of Music on Saturdays then became a Junior Exhibitioner at the Royal College of Music as a violinist and pianist. Then studied music at Birmingham University, where she had her first singing lesson.

Seen her before? Began with Welsh National Opera and was the Coliseum's kitchen boy (one of many male roles) in this season's *Rusalka*.

What next? Octavian in the ENO's *Der Rosenkavalier*.

At home: "I live with my two labradors in Luton. Am very heart-on-sleeve. Cry at Lassie films. I like talking so much, which is not good for the voice. I also get barred from parties."

KATE BASSETT

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UP TO WINTER



MUSICALS

How Des McAnuff brought *The Who's Tommy* to Broadway, and now into the West End



BASE NOTES

Is *The Horse Whisperer* with Robert Redford next on the agenda for Emma Thompson?

THE TIMES ARTS



BASE NOTES

Chess, Tim Rice's collaboration with the Abba boys, hits the road on its tenth anniversary



BASE NOTES

... and it's *The Tempest* performed in Regent's Park for Denis Quilley this summer

Hand the pinball crown to him

The Broadway hit *The Who's Tommy* opens here soon. Matt Wolf meets the man who made it all possible

The New York success of *The Who's Tommy*, which arrives in London next week, altered the face of Broadway in several ways. At the time, Broadway was reaching out to embrace new and different material — and with it, an audience uninterested in (or unaware of) the latest offerings from Andrew Lloyd Webber, Cy Coleman, or Stephen Sondheim. *Tommy*, Pete Townshend's landmark 1969 rock opera, provided the material to attract that audience.

Running for more than two years, the \$6 million show won five Tony Awards, and succeeded in winning over a group of theatre-goers who might have been expected to put up the most resistance: the critics. Frank Rich, then the *New York Times*'s much-feared chief critic, wrote: "The show is so theatrically fresh and emotionally raw that newcomers to *Tommy* will think it was born yesterday."

Perhaps only the advancing years of many Tony voters kept it from winning the top prize, Best Musical. That went instead to *Kiss of the Spider Woman* — a product of exactly the old school (director Hal Prince, composer-lyricists John Kander and Fred Ebb) that *The Who's Tommy* leaves behind.

Townshend's pulsating music, the soundtrack to a troubled era that sounds no less urgent a quarter of a century on, was by no means the production's lone attraction. Stage versions of *Tommy* have been tried before, including one in the West End co-produced by the Who themselves, with Allan Lowe as the messianic Tommy, but never with lasting success.

The version that opens next week, starring Paul Keating as the deaf, dumb and blind kid and Kim Wilde as his mother, should change all that.

On Broadway, the music and story were bolstered by a spectacular staging that coupled theatrical sleight-of-hand — 54 projectors were trained on 18 panels at the rear of the stage — with real emotional bite. What could have been no more than an ear-splitting song cycle became a dynamic, through-sung play about the coming to maturity of an emotionally scarred child.

Of the evening's many participants, it is possible the show's director and co-librettist Des McAnuff may be its real star. Without him, *Tommy* might have been just another gimmick, a *Buddy* or *Beatlemania* to which nostalgic audiences could sing along, and then forget.

The Who's Tommy pushed McAnuff to the front of that list of directors who can be entrusted with a major musical, and it brought him a second Tony for Best Director to set alongside his 1985 win for *Big River*, a musical adaptation of Huckberry Finn that was probably too American ever to receive a major London production.

Last season, he was again up for a Tony (he lost to Hal Prince's *Show Boat*) for his revival of Frank Loesser's *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, which begins its second year on Broadway next month.

But the heart of McAnuff's musical education beats, not in traditional Broadway fare, but in the likes of Townshend's super-loud '60s pop. The hash-smoking adolescent growing up in Canada "grew up listening to rock'n'roll, rhythm and blues. I first saw Bob Dylan play when I was 11".

McAnuff, 43, who was raised in the town of Guelph, some 40 miles from Toronto, and studied theatre at Ryerson, a Toronto polytechnic. "The musical seemed very foreign to me," he says. "It wasn't until *Hair* came along that I really thought that maybe there was room in the theatre for music I liked."



Des McAnuff, the director of *The Who's Tommy*, opened the door to stage success for a rock opera that had previously only really lived on record

The idea that *Tommy* was this kind of pro-drug thing when, in fact, it was completely the opposite: Townshend had quit drugs. Our stage version is a much more thoughtful look at what it was about.

The idea to put *Tommy* back on stage appealed to McAnuff as a way to reinvent a genre — the musical — constantly said to be dying. "I wanted to bring to the theatre the music I play and listen to, which, for the most part, is electric music, from zydeco to be-bop."

It has always struck me as peculiar that the only music that tends to flourish in the theatre comes out of the music of 40 or 50 years ago. While

other people, the Canadian Ballet included, had taken the album and maybe done things with it, no one had done it with Pete Townshend's co-operation: there were a lot of unofficial versions of *Tommy*.

McAnuff launched the new show at the La Jolla Playhouse in southern California, the enterprising regional theatre of which he was artistic director from 1983 to 1994. Indeed, all four of his Broadway forays — the other is the Lee Blessing two-hander *A Walk in the Woods*, later seen on the West End in a different production with Alec Guinness — began at the non-profit Playhouse.

Broadway, McAnuff insists, was never a goal. (He and Ray

Davies of the Kinks collaborated on a musical, *80 Days*, that has yet to travel beyond California.)

As *Tommy* headed east, some objected to a new ending that brings the second act to an emotional climax in keeping with the supposedly kinder, gentler 1990s. Didn't the emphasis on family reconciliation sell short both the Who and the incendiary times that spawned *Tommy*?

McAnuff smiles wryly: "Basically, *Tommy* has a sadistic, abusive cousin. His uncle is an alcoholic child abuser. He watches his father shoot his mother's lover before his eyes — it's a very normal family which, as far as I can tell, has

very little to do with what Bill Clinton or Dan Quayle would describe as family values."

The criticism that the piece has been softened "is somewhat of a kneejerk reaction," McAnuff says. "People want *Tommy* to get killed at the end: they have it in their minds that *Tommy* dies, which of course is not true."

"The show is about someone's journey towards a kind of enlightenment, so there's a resolution at the end. It's about a spiritual release that happens on stage every evening."

● **SO YOU** thought you had seen the last of Chess, the "Cold War" musical written by Sir Tim Rice and the chaps from Abba? We are not even into the endgame, it seems. The pawns are advancing again, this time on an eight-month British tour that will mark the musical's tenth anniversary. Eighteen venues will be visited, beginning in Dartford on March 25.

● **BRAVING** the elements in Regent's Park this summer will be Denis Quilley. He will play Prospero in the Open Air Theatre's production of *The Tempest*: a play to tempt fate, if ever there was one. Also in the Regent's Park programme will be a new staging of *Pain* by Yvonne Rainer.

● **CLASSICAL** music's most coveted award, the Royal Philharmonic Society Gold Medal, has been awarded to the American composer Elliott Carter and the Czech conductor, Rafael Kubelík. Kubelík's father, the violinist and composer Jan Kubelík, was a recipient of the award in 1902.

● **WHILE** Paul McCartney's Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts seizes all the media limelight, its older rival in the "Fame School" market — the BRIT School for Performing Arts and Technology — has quietly been finding itself a high-powered new principal. She is Clare Venables, the director who has run a string of theatres over the past 25 years, most recently the Crucible in Sheffield. She is currently directing *Kiss Me Kate* at the new Norwich Playhouse.

The BRIT School, which opened in Croydon five years ago, is funded by the record industry and the government. "Performing arts should be treated seriously, and it is a privilege for me to be going somewhere where that is recognised," Venables says.

CONCERTS: An extended banquet of one of Chopin's Parisian contemporaries. Plus Järvi displays his growing authority as a conductor

Nobody who wrote a march on the death of a parrot for choir and woodwind can be all bad. And Charles-Valentin Alkan, virtuoso and recluse, wrote a lot more beside. So much so that the Queen Elizabeth Hall must have heard more notes in a single evening than in any representative month when Jack Gibbons presented a packed house with the first London performance of all 12 of Alkan's *Etudes*, Op 39.

But when is an *Etude* not an *Etude*? When it is a symphony or a concerto, no less. Alkan knew Chopin well enough in the Paris of the 1830s, and paid tribute to his ornamental phraseology in many a more hushed or hyperactive movement. But in Alkan's case, four *Etudes* make a symphony and three more make a concerto. And the opening "movement" of his concerto is longer than the entire span of many others.

What made this three-hour, tripartite concert bearable was the performing personality of Gibbons — though I have to admit that I conceded defeat and departed two-thirds of the

Come into my study

Jack Gibbons
Queen Elizabeth Hall

way through: my receiving apparatus, blasted for two hours, had simply given up. Gibbons has lived with the music of Alkan since the age of 14, giving the first Oxford performance of the monumental Concerto when he was 16.

Not only does he possess both the stamina and a technique prodigious enough to master everything the music requires, but he scrupulously respects Alkan's own insistence on clarity, precision and control — with virtually no rubato — in this most hugely romantic of music. And when one is feeling battered to death

by those obsessive rhythms, clangorous pedal points, spiralling sequences and banal melodies, Gibbons ties it all up with aplomb and beams at the audience like a small boy, delighted with every minute of it and ready, I dare say, to start all over again.

Gibbons empathises, too, with the naivety which suddenly smiles at the heart of Alkan's writing: a moment of harmonic delight, a sudden window opening on to a fragment of a chorale, a passage in sugar-spun thirds which lasts just long enough to be truly ingenious.

He helped us through the Symphony by abstracting its several themes with evident glee. He wooed us at the start with an eager, child-like performance of the whirlwind which is *Comme le vent*, and I am sure, will have given his generous and imaginative all to the final set of 25 Aeolian variations, *Le Festin d'Esop*. I hope someone took him out to a banquet with as many courses afterwards.

HILARY FINCH

In all the colours of experience

After his first concert with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Paavo Järvi might have been surprised by his appointment as principal guest conductor but not too worried about it. Now everything has changed. His three-year contract begins next season, which means that he will still be in place when Sir Simon Rattle goes. Järvi will have an important role in sustaining continuity.

He is not likely to be intimidated by the responsibility, however. His authority has developed considerably since his last concert in Symphony Hall 18 months ago — during which time he has taken up appointments as chief conductor of the Malmö Symphony Orchestra and as principal guest conductor of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra — and, besides, he will always have the good advice of his father, Neeme Järvi, who was principal

CBSO/Paavo Järvi
Symphony Hall,
Birmingham

pal guest conductor of the CBSO in the early 1980s.

There are likenesses between the two, but Paavo has his own precise and economical from-the-wrist baton technique and his own personality. If he seems to be disproportionately concerned by the colour and quality of the orchestral sound, it is not at the expense of rhythmic interest. His account of Mozart's Symphony No 28 in C, K200, was certainly pretty in sound, and there was just an occasional inclination to linger, but it was disciplined in ensemble and lacked little in vitality.

The major challenge was Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony, a score which Järvi conducts from memory and to which he brings an admirably fresh

approach. Some of the colouring, particularly in the first movement, was so sensational that, by ordinary standards, it seemed excessive. In fact, he did nothing which is not actually prescribed by the composer. If other conductors make less of what is written, it is probably in the belief — which this interpretation tended to confirm — that if they touch on the extremes at too early a stage, the rest of the work will seem tame. Happily, on this occasion there was enough rhythmic energy in reserve and enough imagination to present the last movement in almost as fierce a light as the first.

The importance of having a Rattle in long-term charge of an orchestra such as the CBSO was demonstrated by the performance of Shostakovich's First Cello Concerto. The soloist was Eduardo Vassallo, principal cellist and an instrumentalist fully equipped for a solo career. If he

failed to sustain the tension in the cadenza, which must be the longest soliloquy in the concert repertoire, he was eloquent enough in the slow movement, incisively ironic, brilliantly witty and unfailingly secure elsewhere.

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In the name of Scott, go!

Vernon Bogdanor says MPs should force resignations

The Scott inquiry was established, the Attorney-General declared in 1992, "to examine whether ministerial responsibility should be pinned in any particular area". Whether Sir Richard has done this successfully must be for Parliament and people to decide. The procedural irregularities, so cogently identified by Lord Howe, make it difficult to accept the Report as a final verdict. Its findings should be seen more as a point of departure than a terminus.

Scott does not, as that master of news management, Ian Lang, would have us believe, find the Government "not guilty" on all counts. Admittedly, the Report rejects the wider charges — that ministers conspired at exporting lethal arms to Iraq, or conspired to send innocent people to prison. Such charges should never have been made.

If the Report really exonerates the Government, why have ministers not accepted it? Malcolm Rifkind, speaking on *The World Tonight* on Thursday, confessed that the Government in fact rejected two of Scott's conclusions. These are that Sir Nicholas Lyell was personally at fault in his handling of the Matrix Churchill prosecution, and that William Waldegrave failed to comply with the principle of ministerial accountability. Such serious charges, if proved, should entail resignation.

The Report finds Lyell's interpretation of the law on public interest immunity claims in the Matrix Churchill case to be "unsound". His advice, that ministers had an automatic duty to sign such certificates, was never plausible. For if the signature were automatic, why should it need a minister to give it, rather than a junior official? A ministerial signature was an assertion that it would be injurious to the public interest to release the documents. Ministers should not have let themselves be reduced to the status of clerks.

The one minister who had qualms, Michael Heseltine, was mistakenly told that he was under a legal duty to sign a certificate, although he believed that the public interest required disclosure. The advice Heseltine was given was "based on a fundamental misconception of the principles of public interest immunity law". Worse still, a vital letter which Heseltine sent to the Attorney-General shortly before the Matrix Churchill trial, making clear his view of the limited nature of the certificate which he had signed, was left unread for at least three weeks. Scott finds this "astounding".

Sir Nicholas seems also not to have informed either the prosecuting counsel or the judge of Heseltine's belief that the documents should be disclosed. As a result, the prosecution in the Matrix Churchill case argued that the documents were irrelevant to the defence and that the judge should not inspect them. Fortunately, the judge rejected this argument.

Public interest immunity certificates seem not have been

used before in a criminal trial. While it is highly unlikely that innocent men would have gone to jail as a result, the Attorney-General seems to have taken far too light-hearted an attitude to the rights of defendants in a criminal trial. Unless he has a cogent defence to this charge, Parliament should enforce the Attorney-General's resignation. For Sir Nicholas seems to have shown a degree of negligence and incompetence incompatible with the position of senior law officer to the Government.

William Waldegrave is accused, not of negligence or incompetence, but of misleading Parliament. This, Scott concludes, was "deliberate". As a result of the inaccurate information he provided in 27 letters sent to MPs and inaccurate answers to Questions in the Commons, "Parliament and the public were misled" (my emphasis) led to believe that a stricter policy towards non-lethal defence exports and dual-use exports was being applied than was in fact the case. Mark Hyslop, a Foreign Office official who drafted letters for Waldegrave, believed that ministerial statements were untrue, and left the Foreign Office in January 1990. Civil servants ought not to be subjected to such strains on their integrity.

Waldegrave's defence is that he was misinterpreting the guidelines on exports to Iraq, rather than adopting "a new and more liberal policy". This, for Scott, is "so plainly inapposite as to be incapable of being sustained by serious argument". Waldegrave, Scott concludes, "consistently failed" to comply with the standard set by the Government's own document, *Questions of Procedure for Ministers*, "and, more important, failed to discharge the obligations imposed by the constitutional principle of Ministerial accountability".

It is now for Parliament and, in particular, for Conservative MPs to determine whether Scott has indeed pinned responsibility on Lyell and Waldegrave. The auguries are not promising. Governments have used the cloak of collective responsibility to ensure that ministerial faults go unpunished. The convention of ministerial responsibility, perhaps the central principle of our constitution, has a crucial weakness: it cannot be enforced against a recalcitrant government.

Thus perhaps the deepest lesson of the Scott inquiry is that Parliament is in danger of losing its capacity to bring ministers to account. If that happens, there will be a search for alternative methods of accountability, for some reference point beyond Parliament so that executive power can be made subject to proper control. It is, then, not only ministers who will be on trial when the Commons debates the Scott report, but Parliament itself as it seeks to prove that it remains what it has always claimed to be, the grand inquest of the nation.

The author is Reader in Government at Oxford.

Prince Charles's local vicar, John Hawthorne, on how a rural town copes with drugs and violence

Tetbury is the tourist's dream of a small Cotswold market town. The tall, slim spire of its elegant 18th-century parish church is visible for miles around, welcoming the thousands of visitors who come to browse among the dozens of antiques shops, and perhaps hope to catch a glimpse of the Prince of Wales as he drives out to Highgrove, his country home on the town's southern edge. The only violent death any of them could surely imagine occurring in Tetbury would be that of the occasional fox at the hands (or hounds) of the indigenous Beaufort Hunt.

But the late idyll that is Tetbury has been shattered — shattered by eight recent violent deaths, mostly related to drugs. A fortnight ago, more than 250 people packed themselves into the local primary school for a public meeting, called by the local churches and with the personal backing of the Prince. A council meeting was postponed so that members could attend. Next Monday, another meeting will be held.

Many brave families came to the meeting, families who were prepared to speak of their own tragedies. They were solid, respectable families. Drug addicts in rural communities like Tetbury are mostly young, white and middle class. They do not come

An everyday horror story of country life

from the gutters of the inner cities, as many imagine, that is merely where they end up.

One father told of his teenage son, who recently spent a year in prison awaiting trial for the manslaughter of his mother, and is now at home on probation. The father emphasised that his wife's death was not itself drug-related. But he went on to say that his son had told him of his year in prison, and of the pressure there to take drugs. They were life. "The most important thing we can do," his son had said, "is to tackle the spread of drugs in prisons."

Anybody who knows anything about prisons will say the same — not least the charity RAPT (Rehabilitation of Addicted Prisoners Trust). With the full co-operation of the Governor, the Trust has been running a voluntary rehabilitation programme

at Downview Prison in Surrey since 1992. When the programme began, the prison was just 12 per cent drug-free; the figure is now almost 100 per cent. The Trust has just begun work in Coldingly Prison, and will shortly tackle Pentonville. But it was only last year that the Prison Service began funding the Downview project.

Despite the seductive title of last May's White Paper, *Tackling Drugs Together*, Government policy and practice appear out of step. Until they are in step, the vicious circle of drugs, crime, prison and back to drugs will continue. The White Paper quotes an estimate that £664 million of acquisitive crime a year is heroin-related. This is £338 million more than the Paper's estimate for the entire Government annual expenditure on tackling drug misuse across the UK. It costs the taxpayer £24,000 a year to

keep someone in prison, whereas an intensive RAPT programme costs a mere £1,800 per prisoner.

The people of Tetbury have galvanised themselves into action. Youth leaders and social workers, with representatives of the schools, police, parents and the community at large have signed up as one to come together, urgently, to take practical steps to fight the drugs menace in the town before there is yet another funeral. They aim to form an action and awareness group, working with and for young people and families. They are determined, too, to find means of relieving the boredom and frustration that all young people find in small towns and villages everywhere, and which make them easy targets for the pushers and dealers.

At present, Gloucestershire has an imaginative drugs strategy, actively

supported by the Prince's Trust, which has much in common with the White Paper. But at the Tetbury meeting, a widely-held view was: "The trouble with policy is that it is made by politicians." The parties, as we come up to a General Election, are vying with each other to be seen to be tough on crime and tough on drugs. Anything less will cost votes. As a result we have a policy that, on the surface, looks and sounds good, but whether it will seriously tackle and begin to overcome the real drugs problem is open to doubt.

It is open to doubt because the thinking behind the policy is too shallow, and it is shallow because senior politicians of all parties seem frightened to look too deep.

Sing Spear, the former head of the Home Office Drugs Inspectorate, in his last public statement just before he died last year, called on politicians to re-think their entire approach to the drugs problem.

He wrote: "Few British politicians seem prepared to dip more than a tentative toe into the debate, far less engage in a fundamental re-think." But until we have that re-think, violent deaths in Tetbury and communities like it will continue.

The author is Vicar of Tetbury.

Why you never tip an equal

Service charges force customers to pay and be robbed, or refuse and be humiliated. The law should ban them

I rather think that it is I who should be called to task for now going on about restaurant charges, though none of the restaurateurs has as yet even asked my opinion. More fools they.

To begin with, the fracas is not just about hiked prices — those have been going on for many years, and the customers likewise have been complaining since — well, since... the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat... (Mind you, there is another bit about being cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field, which suggests that Adam and Eve were vegetarians. I should sincerely hope not.)

But before I get into the fray, I must offer my credentials. To start with, I will have you know that I am a *Chevalier de la Confrerie des Tastes-Fromages de France*, and I have a scroll, together with a beautiful green sash and a medalion to hang on it. More to the point, eating good food and drinking good wine (in particular with good company) has been my hobby throughout my life.

And why not? There are people who collect rare stamps and glow with pleasure when they find a beautifully-kept Penny Black; nobody says the collector is a fool. There are other people — many who stand on the touchline of a soccer or rugby game in cold and rain to cheer their idols; why not, if it pleases them? There are those who can pore over a chessboard for hours — and without actually playing, but just following a printed game played years ago.

I love good food and enjoy it, just as those who enjoy their own hobbies do.

Yet, there is one difference: a strange difference, which I have written about before. The worst that can be said of the stamp-collector is that he is wasting his time in trivialities; the worst said of the Chess-follower is that he gets too angry; the worst of chess is that the spectators get bored.

But the man who makes food his hobby will be laughed at, sneered at and even shouted at. I will take good odds that there will be several letters in my postbag when this column is

published, letters which denounce me as a voluntery; my only consolation is that half of them can't spell voluntery and the other half don't know what it means.

No, dammit: that is not my only consolation. I have many consolations, among which will be found my pleasure in good food.

But now to the subject I was supposed to be discussing: the Earl of Bradford's assault, not on restaurant prices, but on restaurant money tricks. The Earl has put forward a measure, called the Restaurant (Service and Cover Charges) Bill, the purpose of which is to bring Britain into line with the rest of Western Europe in the matter of paying for meals. Let me make all clear.

If you have a restaurant meal in France, you will be given one bill at the end of it. The bill will include all service and other charges, and no one is expected to give more nor do they. The same is true for Belgium, Germany, Holland and indeed all the Western European nations. Except Britain.

In Britain, your bill can include — openly and without blushes from the

Bernard Levin

patron — separate cover charges, separate vegetables (this is not a joke), separate coffee, even separate *petit-fours* (this is also not a joke). And there is no rule covering all these things in all restaurants: two restaurants side by side in the same street can be charging in vastly different ways.

The Earl of Bradford — three cheers for him: no, six — has now taken up the cudgels, and if he wants a cudgel with nails sticking out, I'm his man.

Naturally, most of the most expensive restaurants are screaming the place down: just look at a few here. But before you do, take the measure not just of the prices but, much more significantly, of the way the restaurateurs wriggle out of their claims to be modest when the bill comes.

For instance, at Kensington Place (which has the remarkable honour of being the noisiest restaurant in London), "the service charge is left to the discretion of the customer... although parties of nine or more are told there is a fixed charge of 12½ per cent. Then comes the *coup de grâce*: "...if for any reason a party questions this, we would shrug and refund it," says Tim Brice, the



manager. "...Happily, so far, no one has complained."

Happily, so far, no one has complained.

Oh, yes? Just picture the scene: here is a diner, just finishing his meal. There has been no complaint about the food and wine and service. But the diner doesn't want to pay for the service, and he refuses to tip. A certain *froidure* would ensue, would it not?

Or take the same road to the Pont de la Tour, which is owned by the Terence Conran Group (as is everything except Mount Everest, and there is a bid out for that now) — and which demands 12½ per cent irrespective of the number of the party. "Should a customer question the charge," says its man, "I would ask if anything was wrong, but he or she would not be forced to pay the tip."

Just one more: James Ward of Orso, near Covent Garden, says: "Tipping is discretionary, while there is a fixed service charge of 12½ per cent on parties of 10 or more, but there would be no question of enforcing the charge if the customer did not want to pay."

The only words finding this catalogue are "Come off it". Legally, of course, the service charges (which, in a very great number of restaurants, including some well-known ones, are dreadful or invisible), need not be

paid, and that is the screen behind which so many restaurateurs hide. But, dear reader and eater, have you ever seen, in a respectable restaurant, a customer raising his voice not to blast the food, with which he is wholly content, but to argue about the tipping? No, dear reader and eater, you haven't. Nor have I. Nor has anybody else. Nor does the picture need a very large major-domo to browbeat the customer who refuses a tip, in whatever guise.

Let me turn the story just a little. One day, in New York, I was dining alone, but when I had finished my meal (a very good one, as I recall), I saw a friend on the other side of the restaurant, who beckoned me over. He motioned me to sit down, and he was very angry at something connected with the tip. I calmed him down, and another friend joined us. In helping my first friend to stop seething, the third voice said words that I have never forgotten, though this all happened a good many decades ago. He said: "You never tip an equal."

I have used those words in countless forms and places, and with countless effects. For they are packed with meaning, are they not? I look up from my desk at *The Times* and I see a colleague, a colleague who has

recently given me a bit of help. I have thanked him, but in doing so, I would never have thought of giving him money, nor would he have thought to take it. You never tip an equal.

When you think of it, do you not feel that the entire business of tipping is not only distasteful, but shocking and almost evil? During my first visit to New Zealand (and I hope it was the first of many), one of the most striking items that I took into my mind and heart was the fact that there was in New Zealand no tipping. It wasn't a rule, much less a law; but the weight of my shoulders when I learned that wonderful truth will never fade from my memory.

Come, Lord Bradford and your colleagues: there will be Members of the House of Commons, and also some in the Lords, who would like to scupper your splendid Bill. I regret to say that (some? many? all?) of those who fight it are in one way or another tied up with the catering and restaurant world.

The last stand of the "Keep tipping alive" team will be a false and indeed almost criminal claim: that tipping has to go on because, in many places, the tippers cannot live decently without tips. It answers itself: try using decent wages for those who have none. Meanwhile, let us remember those potent words: You never tip an equal.

Grassed off

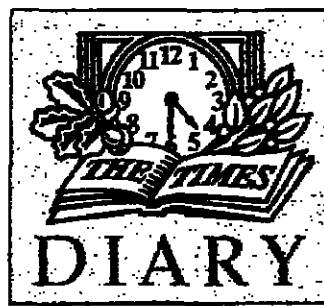
THE COLLAPSE of the IRA ceasefire has achieved what the elements have always singularly failed to do. For the first time, MPs have been driven from their beloved media playground, College Green, as part of a massive security clampdown at Westminster.

They have been advised by the Sergeant at Arms's office that the scrubby patch of grass is off-limits for interviews with broadcasters and journalists until further notice. Officially called Abingdon-Green

but known as College Green because of its proximity to Westminster School, the lawn has a crucial role in the democratic process when the House of Commons is sitting. During the leadership election last summer, it became a battleground as TV crews camped there around the clock. Sir Teddy Taylor, one of the most familiar faces, is mortified. "It's desperately sad and just one of the many problems we have with this non-democratic lifestyle."



Keep off the lawn: MPs must stay away from College Green



● The train from Liverpool back to London after the Requiem Mass for the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, the Most Rev. Derek Worlock, on Thursday was heaving with clerics. On arrival at Euston, the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Basil Hume, sailed down an escalator, patting the episcopal pockets and deliberating with two priests over whether he had the right change for the tube fare.

Do I like that

WHETHER a former England football manager, when even his days at a struggling First Division club are done? Graham Taylor, the man dubbed "the Turnip" by the tabloids and forced to resign as man-

ager of Wolverhampton Wanderers in the face of hostile public opinion last year, has a new life on the party circuit.

At a champagne-and-oysters bash in Chelsea on Thursday night, he was tanned and relaxed and talked of a new love. "I have been really getting into the theatre," he explained. "It's wonderful. A completely different drama to the football field. I saw *The Entertainer* the other day. Do you know it? Marvellous stuff."

Ice cool

MEMBERS OF the Icelandic Society in London are on tenterhooks over the prospect of sitting down to supper tonight with Jeremy Paxman. The interrogator was yesterday trying to re-schedule his domestic arrangements in order to attend their annual "thorablot" or midwinter feast. The invitation came after Paxo confided over lunch recently that he wanted to try his hand at slaying puffins.

The menu at the thorablot will include such delicacies as shark — preferably buried for up to 13 years before consumption — pickled rams' testicles, sheep's heads and the Icelandic schnapps, Brennivín (more commonly known as Black

Death). Paxman is slightly dismayed. "What, no endangered species? How disappointing. And no puffin, what a shame. I am now known in the office as the puffin strangler," he said.

Spaced out

AFTER the revelations this week that Mensa magazine is carrying advertisements for sperm donors to create a race of super-brains, news comes of an even more alien



"No wonder I couldn't lift it. Reg"

project. A band of the throbbing eggheads have set up a Mensa UFO study group.

The first official newsletter has been beamed down on to my desk. One contributor outlines the nine "extra-terrestrial types" in contact with Earth and notes that there are alien bases in the US, China and Australia, but not in Britain.

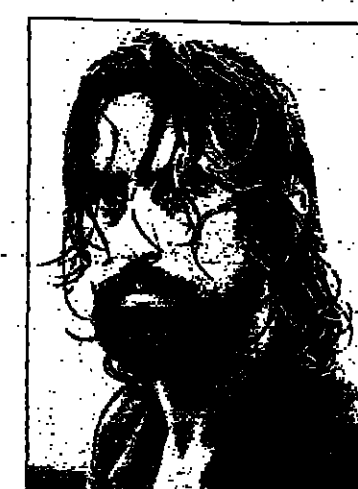
Mensa member Sir Clive Sinclair welcomes the new group. "It's an interesting subject, but it's not my particular hobby."

Time for tea

LORD BROCKET, the disgraced peer now serving five years in jail for fraud, is settling in nicely at Bedford Prison. He is said to have landed himself a cushy job serving tea and buns to prison warders. "Prisoners quite look up to him because he has this air of authority, having been an officer in the army," says one warder.

Mad Mag

THE hot tip from Hollywood is that Robert De Niro is lined up for the latest literary blockbuster. After all the heaving bosoms of recent Jane Austen adaptations, the pub-

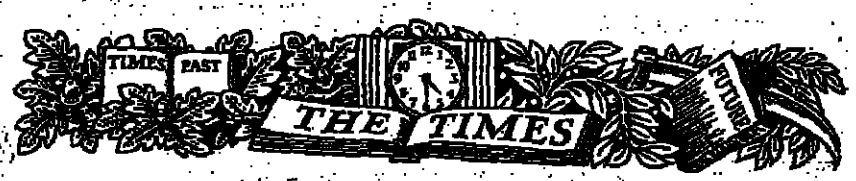


Convincing convict: De Niro

lic seems to have an insatiable appetite for filmed versions of the classics — and *Great Expectations*, set in a contemporary context, is next on the list.

Robert De Niro, who has a good line in madmen, is to play the escaped convict, Magwitch, who so terrorises young Pip. With De Niro's penchant for "the method," it might be wise to steer clear of graveyards in the marshes for a bit.

P.H.S



WAR CRIMES TIGHTROPE

Where justice and reconciliation walk together

Richard Goldstone has been entrusted with a task that is as hazardous as it is momentous. The South African jurist is the chief prosecutor for the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Working with specially-devised judicial methods — and an institution not seen since the Nuremberg trials — he has to walk daily along a taut tightrope, retaining always a balance between the importance of justice in Bosnia and the need for reconciliation. Mr Justice Goldstone's tightrope is tied at one end to Bosnia's past, and at the other end to the country's future. It is tied at a great height, from which a fall would be calamitous, and is shaken constantly by the blood-stained hands of those who fear the tribunal and its consequences.

In the circumstances, the chief prosecutor needs to advance with an assured step and a clear head. Fortunately, he has both. His announcement on Wednesday that the tribunal is about to indict the first Bosnian Muslims for suspected war crimes was an important proof of the tribunal's impartiality, and confirms the chief prosecutor's high reputation for fairness and rigour.

Put bluntly, the announcement could not have come at a better time. A fortnight ago, the Bosnian Government arrested two aides to Ratko Mladic, the military commander of the Bosnian Serbs. Unlike General Mladic himself, the aides, thought to be war criminals, have not as yet been indicted by the tribunal. Should they, then, have been arrested? The Bosnian Serbs thought not, and angrily broke off dealings with the Nato-led implementation force. As if acknowledging the question marks which hovered over their actions, the Bosnian Government, very correctly, passed responsibility for the men arrested to Mr Justice Goldstone's tribunal. Yet the chief prosecutor recognised the need to assuage Bosnian Serb sentiment: he has done so by making clear that the Muslims have their "bad guys" too.

The tribunal has a mandate to indict, try and imprison perpetrators of war crimes. Whether Serb, Croat or Muslim. The judicial process is intended to satisfy a hunger for justice and retribution in a land scarred by war: this hunger cannot, and should not, be ignored. But care must also be taken to ensure that the process of ethnic reconciliation — which is the only basis for lasting peace in the area — is not itself disturbed by the war crimes trials. The judicial process must assist, not work against, the reconstruction of Bosnia.

However painful to the victims and their relatives, it should be obvious that every last villager who torched his neighbour's house will not be indicted. To do so would be to set community against community once again, at a time when the delicate process of reintegration has scarcely begun. There is, instead, to pick carefully those who should stand trial, and then to ensure that those picked do not escape the course of justice.

There is a powerful political case — which does no violence to moral imperatives — for identifying, and pursuing as vigorously as possible, those who led the atrocities, gave orders and framed policy. Unless individuals are clearly identified as responsible for these crimes, collective hatreds will continue to fester. To pursue those who were chiefly responsible is not an ignoble way of drawing the line. There will be fewer trials, of course; but each one will serve as powerful symbol and example. As Mr Justice Goldstone has often said, there is no contradiction between this kind of carefully-drawn justice and genuine peace. By focusing principally on the brains behind the barbarism, the task is also greatly simplified. It is easier to detain a small number of readily identifiable war criminals than it is to sift through entire communities, especially in those cases where no one can truly be described as innocent. Guilt in Bosnia is commonplace: that is why Mr Justice Goldstone walks a tightrope.

CHERRY-PICKERS

The Bible, Shakespeare, Johnson, Churchill — and now Scott

The Scott report has been pigeonholed among the classics. However, this plump pigeon goes into the hole not for its prose, wit, readability, conversations or drama, but for its chameleon quality. The report on arms exports to Iraq is a poem in which ministerial goldfish glitter and Opposition piranhas go on feeding frenzy. From it the Government can pick out the plums of vindication with honour. But from it enemies can also pluck the sloes of condemnation of this same Government as secretive, incompetent, sophistical and economical with the *actualité* as well as the truth.

Selective quotation is a facility afforded by big books, especially one that labours to guard its spine against politicians. The Devil is famous not only for having the best tunes, but also for being able to quote scripture for his own soundbites. Shakespeare is claimed as a supporter by both the hard Right and romantic wets. And prescriptive pedants as well as descriptive permissives can find passages to prop up their prejudices in the works and words of Dr Johnson. Churchill is a quotation dictionary of textual encouragement for all hobbyhorses in the Tory stables. Sir Richard Scott would not claim to be on a level with the psalmist and other such giants, whose varied genius made them all things to all men. But his latest summing-up includes sticks and carrots for all.

For political cherry-pickers have now systematically taken up selective quotation, which used to be the art of theatre managers. Even the rudest notice can be made to look enthusiastic by omissions and the judicious use of triple dots. "Spectacular..." (Daily

Beast) may have started life on the critic's screen as "This show is a spectacular flop." Unsurprisingly, only the first of James Thurber's two-sentence review — "It had only one fault. It was kind of lousy." — was chosen to advertise the play.

Political cherry-picking is the rhetorical equivalent of the grammatical figure of synecdoche, in which a part is taken out to stand for the whole. But in nautical grammar a fleet of 50 sail at least did have sails, and a team of England caps consists of the players, whether or not they are wearing their caps. But selective quotation and marginal misquotation from Scott have produced confusion rather than grammatical shorthand. On the one quote, ministers did not change the guidelines on arms exports, on the other quote, they were agreeing on a change of policy. The Attorney-General genuinely believed that he was personally, as opposed to constitutionally, blameless. However he was personally at fault. His advice about PII certificates appears correct as well as a fundamental misconception. Ministers did not deliberately mislead Parliament at the same time as there was a deliberate failure to inform Parliament.

So the Scott report is a book to take to the desert island along with the Bible and Shakespeare. For it will provide a quote for every season and taste. Since it pervasively avoids coming to any particular conclusion, it is one of those books for which the reader can make up an ending to suit him. And, if the worst comes to the worst, the report is big and turgid enough to build a raft with — or at the least to frighten away the cannibals.

KEEP SMOKE ALIVE

Irish mist preserves the cigars in the woodpile

Ireland bears as many blessings as curses but the climate that makes the island emerald has, until now, been accounted one of its many drawbacks. The dampness and drizzle that blight potato crops and eat away at the fabric of Ascendancy homes have only contributed to the twilight melancholy of the Gael. But out of Hibernia's uttermost West comes proof that precipitation can be providential.

The damp in a Co Sligo country house has preserved a stock of fine Havana cigars in a smoke-able state for 132 years. Leaves that would have lost their savour and grown stale if left in a draughty corner of an English home or Scottish castle have kept their aromatic oils, despite being mistaken for kindling, thanks to the wet winds from the Atlantic that batter Connacht. Cigar aficionados know the great coronas must be kept cool and moist if they are to maintain their subtle allure. That these neglected torpedoes were sustained through civil war, partition and punitive taxation by heavenly humidity is a reminder, as if we needed one, that like all great men and some great women, God is a cigar-smoker.

The cigar has suffered, unfairly, by association with the plutocrat. The unacceptable face of capitalism has always had a top at on its head and a stoic stuck between its lips. Certainly those who have acquired wisdom as well as wealth have known there are few better investments than the moments spent with a Montecristo. From Winston Churchill to Wyatt of Weeford rose who affect an aristocratic tilt to their oryism have done so with Havana in hand.

It can contribute to an air of arrogance and opponents may have wanted to give these grandees a Punch in the mouth. But they probably already had one there.

Despite its popularity with the men of the Right, a good corona is as much an argument for socialism as a capitalist tool. Che and Castro were high-profile puffery and the finest cigar in the world, Cuba's Cohiba, is the product of Marxist central planning. Groucho may have popularised them but without Karl the cigar would never have reached its most sublime.

Men are seldom so innocently employed as when putting a panatella to their lips. Tobacco has been a peace-maker since the first pipe was passed from Iroquois chief to Pilgrim father and even now it is impossible to muster the aggression needed for any argument while soothed by a subtle Romeo y Julieta. As Churchill himself almost said, puff-puff is better than rough stuff.

The aroma of a great cigar on man is more attractive than any cologne but female enjoyment should not be restricted to the initial rolling of the leaves on lithe thighs or the appreciation of the intoxicating odour. The fastest-growing market for cigars stateside is among young women. There are signs the taste is spreading here. Bacall may have enticed with a smouldering cigarette, but Sharon Stone and Cindy Crawford now inspire respect with an assertive robusto jammed between bee-stung lips. After all, with barriers of taste breaking down between the sexes, women are still women, but why leave cigars to the blokes?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-762 5000

Duty, integrity and accountability, as viewed by Scott

From the Provost of The Queen's College, Oxford

Sir, At least the Scott inquiry (reports and leading article, February 16) has helped to dispel the widespread misunderstanding of our doctrine of ministerial responsibility.

It is an essential feature of that doctrine that the Government has an unchanging policy of giving the fullest information to Parliament. But, of course, one must distinguish between the policy itself, the application of the policy, the guidelines for its application, the interpretation of the guidelines, and relaxation of, or possible changes of emphasis within, the guidelines.

Circumstances often make it necessary for there to be some degree of relaxation or change of emphasis within the guidelines for the interpretation of a relaxed application of an unchanged policy of keeping Parliament fully informed.

These simple distinctions are essential to the understanding of our system of parliamentary accountability and we should all be grateful to ministers for pointing them out.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY MARSHALL,
The Queen's College, Oxford,
February 16.

From Mr Robert Seabrook, QC, and others

Sir, Whatever the wider issues explored in Sir Richard Scott's inquiry, the notion, which has been assiduously peddled in some quarters during the past three years, that the Attorney-General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, was engaged in a deliberate suppression of evidence in the Matrix Churchill prosecution was always unsustainable. It was a shoddy and unwarranted slur on his integrity.

It is our collective understanding and experience that at the time of the Matrix Churchill trial a minister was, as a matter of law, under a duty to decline to disclose documents of a certain recognised class in which there was an established prima facie public interest in non-disclosure. The documents would then be referred to the trial judge, who would carry out a

"balancing exercise" to determine whether the interests of justice in the particular case nevertheless required disclosure.

Anyone having doubts as to whether the recognised procedures were fairly and properly followed in the Matrix Churchill case should be reminded of the following:

1. Prosecuting counsel, Mr Alan Moses, QC, duly placed the material and the ministers' certificates before the court in accordance with his instructions and the well-established procedures. One of the defending counsel in the case, Mr Gilbert Gray, QC, described Mr Moses' conduct of the matter as "the embodiment of fairness" (report, March 24, 1994).
2. The trial judge, Judge Smedley, specifically decided that the immunity had been properly claimed by the ministers concerned.
3. The judge carried out the "balancing exercise" and duly ordered disclosure of most, though not all, of the material and the trial proceeded.
4. Other defending counsel in the case have also specifically refused any suggestion of unfairness, lack of integrity or abuse on the part of the Attorney-General or the prosecuting authorities. Two of them, Mr James Hunt, QC, and Mr Michael Stokes, stated in a letter which you published on November 13, 1992, that "there was no question of anyone attempting to suppress evidence".

There was no "gagging order". The Matrix Churchill prosecution was abandoned not because of any suppression of the truth but because Mr Alan Clark, the former Defence Minister, changed his evidence. To say otherwise would be to distort the "actualities" with which Mr Clark himself was so "economical".

Yours etc,
ROBERT SEABROOK,
MICHAEL BELOFF,
GRAHAM BOAL,
PHILIP HAVERS,
JOHN NUTTING,
ANNE RAFFERTY.
As from: 1 Crown Office Row,
Temple, EC4,
February 16.

From Mr Anthony Barnett

Sir, A new constitutional concept is being pressed upon us, that of "ministerial sincerity". If it is established, government will cease to be answerable in any way that makes sense and public life will be gravely corrupted.

I can understand ministerial responsibility. I appreciate the narrower but in some ways more realistic assertion of ministerial accountability. But ministerial sincerity is something else. What would politicians say to shoppers who claimed they "sincerely believed" they had put an item into the supermarket trolley when it went into their own bag?

So was a wrong committed? The public understands that the Scott inquiry was established in part to decide whether Parliament had been misled. Scott concludes it was "designedly" misled. It is outrageous for ministers to say this is still a matter of "opinion", as Mr Waldegrave argued on television last night. It may have been so before Scott reported. It is no longer.

The fact is established that, designedly, ministers misled Parliament. That Mr Waldegrave did not mean to do this cannot diminish his accountability. The spine of public service will be broken if those in power are answerable only for what they think they do and not for what they actually do.

We can only conclude that legislation is needed, from a Freedom of Information Act to a Civil Service Act, to ensure that those who hold public office are indeed accountable to the public rather than their own state of mind.

Yours sincerely,
ANTHONY BARNETT
(Policy Adviser),
Charter 88,
Exmouth House, 3-11 Pine Street, ECI,
February 16.

From Mr Nicolas Walter

Sir, The Scott inquiry and report and nearly all the comment on both miss the real scandal: not that people with power and money tell lies, which is surely no surprise, but that this country depends on the manufacture and sale of weapons of death.

Yours etc,
NICOLAS WALTER,
88 Islington High Street, NI,
February 16.

Endangered snails

From Dr Norman Moore and others

Sir, We note that the endangered species of snail, *Vertigo moulinsiana*, has been recorded by English Nature at 19 locations along the rivers Kennet and Lambourn in Berkshire (News in brief, February 15). The species has already been reported at the Rack Marsh Nature Reserve, an island in the Lambourn that will be irreparably damaged by the embankments of the proposed Newbury bypass.

Last December the Government's biodiversity steering group placed *Vertigo moulinsiana* on a list of 116 endangered species that should receive priority conservation efforts. Furthermore, the habitat is already under consideration by English Nature as a special area of conservation under the EU habitats directive.

Because no comprehensive environmental impact assessment has been carried out, the international conservation importance of habitats along the bypass route and the damage they would be subjected to from the new road are not known.

It is therefore vital that the Government suspend all works along the bypass route and delay the signing of the construction contract until a thorough and independent environmental impact assessment has been effected.

Yours etc,
DR N. W. MOORE,
Chief Scientific Officer,
Nature Conservancy Council, 1974-83,
ALASTAIR FITTER
(Department of Biology,
University of York),
BRIAN MOSS
(Department of Environmental and Biological Studies, University of Liverpool),
PHILIP WEBBER
(Chair, Scientists for Global Responsibility,
University of York,
Department of Biology,
PO Box No 373, York,
February 16.

Countryside letter

From the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Arco

Sir, Congratulations to *The Times* for supporting the worthy efforts of the Council for the Protection of Rural England (letter, and leading article, February 9; other letters, February 12 and 15).

My own company, Arco, has been operating in and around Britain for more than 25 years. We have always endeavoured to be a good neighbour by supporting deserving causes in the United Kingdom. Being in the oil, gas and chemicals business, we are especially sensitive to environmental concerns.

One of my first decisions on becoming chairman eight months ago was to sponsor a conference of experts on environmental problems to be held in London this December under the chairmanship of Sir Crispin Tickell.

In the meantime, inspired by the appeal of the three party leaders — and your editorial comments — we have contacted the CPRE to offer financial support. We are confident that the combined efforts of government leaders, *The Times* and concerned citizens, supported by contributions from all segments of the United Kingdom, will successfully preserve and restore the truly historic countryside of your great nation.

Sincerely,
MIKE R. BOWLIN,
Chairman and Chief Executive,
Arco,
515 South Flower Street,
Los Angeles, California 90071,
February 13.

Car lights in daytime

From Mr Stephen Prower

Sir, Mr Hugo Griffin-Jorgensen (letter, February 10) cites Swedish and Finnish experience in favour of all vehicles having their lights on in daytime.

After Finland brought in its winter daytime lights law in 1972 only the proportion of mainly animal accidents fell.

In October 1977 Sweden brought in its own law and an official study estimated a reduction in daytime multiple accidents of between 6 per cent and 13 per cent. But it confused the effect of daytime lights with a likely downward trend in night-time drinking and driving.

All that can be concluded is that few Finnish elk crossed the road in daytime and that although Swedish daytime lights may have reduced accidents, possibly fewer drunk Swedes were on the road at night.

Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN PROWER
(Research Officer,
British Motorcyclists Federation),
37 Buckhorn Avenue,
Stevenage, Hertfordshire,
February 10.

No two cues alike

From Mr Stanley R. Lowy

Sir, In your leader of today, "A cue missed", you ask: "Is a snooker cue a work of complex craftsmanship, as a cricket bat is?" As makers of both implements we can tell you the answer is "Yes". Indeed a snooker cue is perhaps more complex to make than a cricket bat, being composed of a number of different woods crafted together by complicated joints and requiring perhaps 100 processes before becoming the finished article.

Since no two pieces of wood are identical, cues cannot be replicated by automatic machinery from homogeneous raw material of a precise specification. They do indeed come in "a perplexing variety of shapes, sizes, finishes, sheens and weights".

To suggest that a cue is not a complex work is on a par with suggesting that just anybody can write a third leader for *The Times*.

Yours faithfully,
STANLEY R. LOWY
(Chairman),
Power Glide,
119/121 Stanstead Road,
Forest Hill, SE23,
February 9.

Farrant case

From Mr Peter Doyle

Sir, A man is standing trial for the murder of his girlfriend. It is a notorious case. To assist his defence and arrest, his picture was in most newspapers today, and on the television too.

As the jury is told who he is and what he is alleged to have done, they say to themselves, "Ah! This is the man we read about, who was hunted high and low". They also remind themselves that he has a previous conviction for rape. How do they know? They opened their newspapers today and read about it.

If Victor Farrant is found, arrested, charged and committed for trial, how does it assist the judge's task of ensuring a fair trial if those who try him already know that he is a rapist?

Yours faithfully,
PETER DOYLE,
9-12 Bell Yard, WC2,
February 14.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-762-5046.

Here today ...

From Dr Jack Barrett, MRSC

Sir, Dr William Alcock's letter (February 6) about the disappearance of Mr Winston Graham's snow (letter, February 2) is scientifically correct, but he failed to describe how it disappeared. It was converted to vapour because the air flowing over it was relatively dry and warmer than the snow. Water molecules on the surface became energized and were ejected into the passing air as a vapour.

Mr J. A. W. Jennings (letter, February 13) is wrong to say that sublimation cannot occur at atmospheric pressure. Although sunlight assists it, the process does not depend entirely upon solar radiation as Mr Graham knows because some of his snow disappeared overnight.

Yours sincerely,
JACK BARRETT,
273 King's Road,
Kingston upon Thames, Surrey,
February 13.

Sport and TV

From Professor Douglas Wood

Sir, Satellite and cable broadcasters are currently willing to pay almost any price for exclusive rights to trophy events enjoying mass audiences on terrestrial channels because this is an effective way for them to boost subscriptions (letters, February 6, 14). Once the target market is signed up, the logic for aggressive bidding disappears.

Unfortunately by then the sports industry is likely to find that the lavish sponsorship currently provided by cigarettes, drink and car companies in exchange for free advertising to mass audiences on terrestrial channels will also have evaporated.

Yours faithfully,
DOUGLAS WOOD,
Manchester Business School,
Booth Street West, Manchester.

Church approach to spirit of the age

From the Right Reverend Hugh Montefiore

Sir, "Ecology counts more than adultery" headed your report (later editions, February 14) about the views of General Synod members. Is this a matter for praise or criticism?

Adultery is a serious sin against the integrity of marriage, which requires exclusiveness, commitment and permanence. But morality is not just about individuals. What of an environmental crisis resulting in the death of millions? Unless there are drastic changes in human behaviour and values, a future of mass starvation, economic insecurity and political instability can be almost guaranteed.

In this context members of General Synod are right to believe that "ecology counts more than adultery". Such a judgment is profoundly prophetic.

The two major problems facing the world are global warming and increasing population. The two are interconnected, for heat and storms damage and ruin crops. Every year brings 90 million more mouths to feed. Yet we have crossed many thresholds of sustainability: fish harvests are falling, and we are living on marine capital: for the third consecutive year grain stocks have fallen and are now at an estimated 49 days of consumption; "set aside" land or new crop developments cannot plug the gap; water tables are falling; there is decreasing cropland per person; fertilizer use is declining.

Unless world population is stabilised, disaster is inevitable. The European Union has done this already and is self-sufficient in basic foods, but it increases global warming through emissions of carbon dioxide.

The saving of souls takes precedence over ecology, but the moral dilemma facing the world is more important than condemnation of adultery.

Yours faithfully,
HUGH MONTEFIORE
(Chairman,
Friends of the Earth Trust),
White Lodge, 23 Bellevue Road,
Wandsworth Common, SW17,
February 15.

From the Chairman of the Synod's House of Laity and others

Sir, Your report of the survey of the General Synod of 1990-95 and accompanying leading article suggest that it shows a Church which is "increasingly left wing... with a greater women's influence".

The last General Synod (like the present one) did include a higher number of women. In doing so, it simply proved itself more representative of the society and the Church it seeks to serve. Having more women in synod does not produce those extreme feminist scenarios portrayed in your leader.

Your report suggests that the survey showed that the Church now comprises mostly Labour and Liberal Democrat supporters. In this, it is no different from the country. In fact a higher percentage of the synod's House of Laity (44 per cent) voted Conservative in 1992 than in the country as a whole (42 per cent).

While bishops believed the issues of poverty and the environment should be engaging the Church, they also said that the Church should speak out on traditional ethical issues such as abortion and euthanasia.

Like all social surveys, the recent analysis of the General Synod's membership deserves careful study. For the open way it has made this possible the synod deserves credit, not the caricature of your leader.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTINA A. BAXTER,
Chairman of the House of Laity,
P. J. GIDDINGS
(Vice-Chairman),
J. M. SENTAMU
(Prolocutor, Convocation of Canterbury),
JOHN A. STANLEY
(Prolocutor, Convocation of York),
The General Synod of the Church of England,
Church House,
Great Smith Street, SW1,
February 14.

From the Reverend Dr Peter C. Jupp

Sir, If Dean Inge were alive, he would probably reiterate that "if you marry the Spirit of your generation, you will be a widow in the next". Earlier, Archbishop Tait had criticised the "broad church" position with the words: "What is wanted is a deeply religious liberal party... the great evil is that the liberals are deficient in religion, and the religious are deficient in liberality".

The survey which you report today suggests that some criticisms of the Church have ageless, if not eternal, validity.

Yours faithfully,
PETER C. JUPP,
Braddon House, High Street,
Duddington, Stamford, Lincolnshire,
February 14.

From Mr A. J. Saunders

Sir, Never mind the Take That fans (report, February 14), what's the counselling hotline for distraught England cricket supporters?

Yours etc,
A. J. SAUNDERS,
16 Stilecher Way,
Westlea, Swindon, Wiltshire,
February 15.

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MARTIN WALLER 28

The Bishop and the Cyberpunks

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An Eastender inspired by spirit of Liverpool



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Stan Collymore: Winning them over at Anfield

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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 17 1996

Merger puts £425m dent in profits at Lloyds TSB

BY PATRICIA TEBIAN
BANKING CORRESPONDENT
PROFITS of the newly merged Lloyds TSB were dented by an unexpected £425 million exceptional cost of combining the two banks over the next four years.

As a result, pre-tax profits for the combined banking group fell by 8 per cent last year to £1.65 billion. Excluding the one-off charge, which will be spent on closing premises, scrapping systems and shedding staff, profits would have been 16 per cent higher at £2.075 billion.

Sir Brian Pittman, chief executive, said the bulk of the cost would go on "scrapping" computer systems and closing premises. Although he admitted that some of the cash would go towards early retirement and redundancy costs, Sir Brian hopes the bulk of any reductions will be achieved from ordinary staff turnover, which is 6,000 a year across the group. The bank employed 86,983 staff at the end of December.

The bank has refused to comment on how many jobs will go next year, when an Act of Parliament allows it to merge branches. But, the banking union, estimates the figure to be 10,000.

Sir Robin Ibbes, chairman, said the bank had produced "strong results", which demonstrated that Lloyds TSB was a stronger force in its chosen market than the two banks on their own. He said that Lloyds TSB was among the first three in personal current accounts, residential mortgages, credit cards, life assurance, pensions and unit trusts.

Sir Robin refused to be drawn on how Lloyds TSB intends to deal with its 63 per cent stake in Lloyds Abbey Life. Analysts said that Lloyds Abbey Life is made up of two distinct businesses, Black Horse Financial Services, which sells to Lloyds customers, and Abbey Life, which has



Sir Brian Pittman, left, and Sir Robin Ibbes, who yesterday maintained that Lloyds TSB had produced "strong results"

a direct sales force. John Leonard, banking analyst at Salomon Brothers, said some form of sale, flotation or merger of the Abbey Life business with another insurer seemed likely.

Lloyds TSB has employed the Boston Consulting Group to advise it on integrating the two banks. Peter Ellwood, TSB's former chief executive, is now deputy to Sir Brian and in charge of combining the retail operations.

Despite the acquisition of Cheltenham & Gloucester for £1.8 billion last August, and the £1 billion special dividend payment to TSB shareholders, the total capital ratio fell from 13 per cent to 9.6 per cent, and the tier one ratio fell from 9 per cent to 5.9 per cent, above analysts' estimates.

Profits from retail financial services, which Sir Robin described as "the heart of the new group", were 46 per cent higher at £1.38 billion. Profits from banking, including mortgages, were £823 million, with

mortgages standing at £37.4 billion at the end of the year. The figures included a £49 million provision for compensation for pensions mis-selling to TSB customers, taking TSB's provision to £84 million and the group provision for pensions mis-selling to £165 million.

Profits from wholesale banking were £482 million, 13 per cent higher. International banking profit rose 30 per cent to £146 million. However, profits from private banking

City fears grow for borrowing target

BY JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT
THE Government repaid £3.7 billion in borrowing in January but corporation tax receipts still disappointed and the City predicted the Chancellor will again overshoot his public borrowing target.

The net repayment on the public sector borrowing requirement was lower than the £4.4 billion analysts had expected and many of them forecast that the PSBR for the full year will total between £32 billion and £33 billion, rather than the £29 billion projected in the Budget. This would make it more difficult to justify further tax cuts in November unless Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, can find yet more cuts in public spending, analysts argued.

As it is, the Government's forecasts for borrowing this year have been revised up repeatedly. In the November 1994 Budget, Mr Clarke predicted a PSBR for 1995-96 of £21.5 billion. In June 1995, that was revised up to £23.5 billion and revised again in November's Budget to £29 billion.

Both corporation tax and VAT receipts were disappointing in January and spending appears to be above target too. Corporation tax was up 18 per cent year-on-year in January but this was below the 27 per cent gain in the previous months of the tax year. VAT revenues plunged 17.7 per cent in January, an erratic move related to the build up of stock levels, but VAT has been running below target throughout the tax year because of weak domestic demand.

The last two months of the tax year are traditionally the heaviest months for government borrowing. In the previous tax year, there was £15 billion of borrowing in February and March. If this were added to cumulative borrowing in the first ten months of the current tax year, the full year PSBR would be £34.7 billion.

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WEEKEND MONEY GUIDES

PART 4
Personal Pensions

BUSINESS TODAY

FT-SE 100	5770.9	(-8.9)
Yield	3.83%	
FT-SE All share	10542.5	(-1.98)
DAX	20802.77	(-39.42)
New York	5818.33	(-35.04)
Dow Jones	7781.5	(-7.28)
S&P Composite	949.23	(-2.05)
Federal Funds	5 1/8%	(5 1/8%)
Long Bond	6 3/4%	(6 1/2%)
Yield	6.21%	(6.17%)
3-month Interbank	6 1/8%	(6 1/8%)
Life long gilt	10 1/8%	(10 1/8%)
Life long gilt	10 1/8%	(10 1/8%)
New York	1.5485	(1.5379)
London	1.5485	(1.5379)
DM	2.2596	(2.2589)
FF	1.1275	(1.1275)
SP	1.5283	(1.5444)
Yen	162.91	(163.39)
£ Index	94.3	(94.2)
London	1.4889	(1.4889)
DM	5.0289	(5.0289)
FF	1.1275	(1.1275)
SP	1.5283	(1.5444)
Yen	162.91	(163.39)
£ Index	94.3	(94.2)
Tokyo close Yen	105.85	
Brent 15-day (May)	\$16.85	(\$16.85)
London close	\$404.55	(\$404.55)

Mark One in hands of administrator

BY PHILIP PANGALOS
MARK ONE (Oxford One), which operates a chain of fashionwear retail outlets for women, has been put into administration.

The company, which was founded in 1976, operates a chain of 96 retail outlets throughout the country and has a workforce of more than 2,200. It continues to trade to facilitate the survival of the company as a going concern.

The administrators are Neville Kahn of Coopers & Lybrand and Philip Monjack of Leonard Curtis & Co.

Mark One suffered losses of about £2 million in the year ending January 31, 1995, on turnover of about £30 million, and trading has deteriorated after a poor Christmas. Mark One has received a winding-up petition and unsecured creditors are owed an estimated £14 million.

Mr Kahn said that interest has already been shown by potential buyers.

Production halted at CI pits and 260 are laid off

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
NEARLY 300 miners were yesterday laid off work as administrators of Coal Investments, the heavily indebted company founded by Malcolm Edwards, halted production at two collieries and closed the company headquarters.

Doubts hang over the future of remaining pits belonging to Coal Investments after 197 miners were sent home from Markham Main, Doncaster, and 70 were laid off at Cwmgwlili, near Swansea. The Doncaster pit was put into care and maintenance after coal ran out in a seam and Arthur Anderson, the administrators who were called into the company 11 days ago, said that further development work could not take place.

Three months ago, for a third colliery of the six owned by Coal Investments, its Coventry colliery is thought to have only about six weeks of current coal supplies. A spokesman for the administrators said that money could not be pumped into development work to open new seams until the pits had been established as viable.

Industry insiders doubt whether Markham Main and Coventry have short-term futures. Both pits have long-term reserves, but the coal is inaccessible and could take at least 18 months to come into production. It is thought that £20 million would be needed to open up Coventry's long-term reserves, and Markham's safe expansion could cost £10 million.

It is not widely expected that Coal Investments, as such, will survive, but separate financing or purchases may be secured for some of its sites. Cwmgwlili, a small drift mine, is not thought to have a future beyond a locally run operation.

About £120 million has been put into the six Coal Investments collieries, but the company plunged into cash flow difficulties after experiencing technological problems and failing to meet production forecasts. In December, the shares were suspended after the company failed to produce financial figures. It put much of the blame on the refusal of planning consent to develop a seam at Hem Heath colliery in Staffordshire.



Edwards founder

BET braced for Rentokil assault

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY
BET executives yesterday cut short a trip to America to attend an emergency board meeting to plot their campaign against a hostile £1.8 billion takeover by Rentokil.

Rentokil's offer values shares in BET, a rival business services group, at 190.1p each, a premium of 37 per cent over the closing price of February 14, the day before speculation on a possible bid caused a sharp rise in the shares.

BET rejected the offer, saying it failed to recognise the group's value. John Clark, chief executive, said: "This is a totally inadequate offer. There is very little overlap between the two companies and Rentokil will effectively be creating a conglomerate."

Rentokil is offering £5 in cash and nine new shares for every 20 BET shares.

There is also a cash alternative of 179.5p. BET shares closed up 11p at 195.5p as the City gambled on the offer being merely the opening shot in the bid battle. Analysts anticipate that Rentokil will need to take the offer above 210p a share to be assured of victory. Rentokil's share price closed down 3.5p at 333p.

Rentokil criticised BET's financial performance, but said it saw synergy between the two businesses. At least 80 per cent of BET would be retained, it added.

Rentokil has won the backing of its majority shareholder, Sophus Berendsen, a Danish company whose 52 per cent holding would fall to 35 per cent if the bid were successful.

Mr Clark stands to receive a payoff of about £2.6 million if the bid succeeds. Mr

Clark, who was paid £1.1 million last year, receives a base salary of £580,000, including pension contributions and has a three-year service contract. He also holds options worth £864,000 at the bid price.

Rentokil was forced to launch a full bid slightly ahead of its intended schedule after speculation sent BET sharply higher on Wednesday and Thursday. The Stock Exchange is believed to be investigating share dealings ahead of the bid.

Rentokil unveiled its full-year results yesterday, with profits meeting the self-imposed 20 per cent target up 21 per cent to £214.5 million on a turnover of £860 million, up 17.1 per cent. The dividend was raised 21 per cent to 4.2p.

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A sprinkling of pixel dust

A particularly hilarious television discussion from the 1950s, which I reproduce from memory alone alas, has a panel of aged worthies discussing the arrival of rock and roll.

All agree that the music is unpleasant and pointless. One, a bishop as I remember, draws his clerical vestments tightly around him and opines, baffled: "I have never felt the need to rock-and-roll."

I have always felt rather the same about the Internet. I know this puts me on the same side of the generational divide as that bishop. For brothel-creeper teddy boys then tearing up cinema seats across the land, read cyberpunks today. I have never surfed the Internet, indeed, I have never felt the need to surf the Internet.

But I am interested in those computer stocks that burst forth like novae once in a while, showering windfalls on investors. You know the sort of thing,

even if you, like I, can never quite visualise what it is that these wondrous devices actually do:

"InterFace Technologies of Luton has signed a development deal with MegaCyberCorp to allow its ProtoX image-slicers to be used on service stations on the InterWeb. The image-slicers will allow the user to access interstitial nodes..."

By the time you have read thus far into the announcement, the share price is well into the troposphere. It is too late; the bell has rung, the bus is away from the kerb. You are left with a vague feeling that if you had just understood it all quickly enough, you might be on the top deck too. There are three things you should know. The smart money, too, cannot tell an image-slicer from a bacon-slicer. The smart money saw the deal, or one like it, coming months ago and bought in not for the image-slicers but because the stock is blessed with that lucky sprinkling of pixel dust.

Today's scramble for shares is just the pay-off.

We had another of these novae this week. Something called Superscape, maker of virtual reality machines whose profits, so far, have also been limited to virtual reality, linked with IBM.

The second point is that there are an awful lot of flakes, and downright frauds, out there. Sexy sectors like computers or biotech draw any number of duds into their slipstream. It is not so many years since a small chemicals company, sensing an advantage to be gained from the Aids scare, announced a new product that killed the HIV virus on any surface on contact. It was selling disinfectant.

The third is that we plucky Brits are not going to do it alone. Superscape follows a familiar road. Last year's big success stories in high-tech stocks, like Unipalm, Azlan and MAID, came after deals struck across the Atlantic.

These are one-offs. If the



MARTIN WALLER

investor is clever enough to spot them, well done. There will be plenty more built out of unpromising materials, like the US software business now touting for cash that has yet to book a dollar of revenue, let alone profit. Some will flare into novae, some implode into black dwarfs.

dramatic, and found around the margins. The challenge is to spot those businesses that will find ways of doing so.

The two difficulties with the InterNet are extracting revenues from those cruising in cyberspace and persuading them to stay still long enough to look at advertising. It is tempting to see the net as analogous to a cable TV network. Those small numbers currently on line are technofreaks, there because they want to be. The services out there, I suggest, are not yet the most important thing.

So the trick would appear to be to hook in non-users like me and, perhaps, you by boosting the services available, in the same way that a cable company bolts together a package of TV channels until this is tempting enough to persuade the potential viewer to open the front door.

But the experts, perhaps keen to retain the mystique, say that the Net will never be a mass-market phenomenon. It is not a

question of shoving product down the consumer's throat. Instead, the "viewer" chooses to come to you because he or she is aware of, and wants, your service. There are currently five million "host sites" on the Net, places in cyberspace where you can go to get something, anything. Consider the problems of a TV station competing with 4,999,999 other channels.

Instead, the experts are excited by so-called hybrid media opportunities. A recent study from Andrea Kirkby at Daiwa talks of "a symbiotic relationship between the World-wide Web and existing advertising media". There are specialist magazines that cross over onto the Net, allowing readers to discuss their little fixations there — EMAP is well advanced in this area.

Several bookstores have tested a system of ordering text down the line and printing in the store, so avoiding the need to tie up shelf space with actual books. So much for the armies of Babbage

and Turing triumphing over those of Gutenberg and Caxton.

One of the most interesting of the hybrid media is being developed by Dorling Kindersley. Producer of some of the best encyclopaedias now in book stores, the publisher also sells these in CD-Rom form. CD-Roms are set to become the worldwide staple for information storage in virtually every medium except the printed word. The encyclopaedias are wonderful, and particularly suited to young and inquiring minds.

But Dorling Kindersley also has plans to use its CD-Rom products to pull those minds onto the InterNet. Not only can the encyclopaedia be regularly updated — consider the changes to the entry on Yugoslavia over the past five years — but the CD-Rom will also give access to the Net, and to other online "clubs" of fellow young enthusiasts.

The bishop and I might recoil, appalled. But I think the Jesuits, at least, would have approved.

EFM calls for cash to acquire Dunedin

By PATRICIA TEHAN
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

EDINBURGH Fund Managers has confirmed its plans to buy Dunedin, the investment manager, from Bank of Scotland and other shareholders in a deal worth £83.25 million. The acquisition will double the size of EFM's funds under management to £8.2 billion.

The deal will be part-funded by the proceeds of a placing and open offer to raise £75 million after expenses. Bank of Scotland, which holds 50.5 per cent of the shares, will net a capital gain of £34 million.

Shareholders, including the Edinburgh Investment Trust, with 28.9 per cent, and three Dunedin trusts, will also benefit from a pre-completion dividend of 68 pence.

The enlarged EFM will have 8 per cent of the UK investment trust market. Significant cost savings should be derived from the amalgamation of the two groups.

EFM also published its results for the year to January 31 yesterday, showing pre-tax profits reduced to £12.8 million from £13.7 million after the sale of its private client fund management business. The dividend is 1p higher at 24p, with a final 17p due May 20.

Lloyds fight intensifies as UniChem raises bid

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE BATTLE for Lloyds Chemists intensified yesterday with UniChem increasing its offer to £634 million and Gehe, the German company, widely expected to up its rival bid. The Lloyds board was holding a meeting last night and considering its response to the UniChem move.

Lloyds Chemists has 900 retail outlets around the country. UniChem and Gehe each control about a third of the drugs wholesale market. Whichever company wins the bid battle will become Britain's second largest chemist chain behind Boots.

UniChem said yesterday's offer was final and Jeffrey Harris, the chairman, denied suggestions from the Gehe camp that its cash and share offer would leave it financially stretched. "I resent that," Mr Harris said. "We don't feel at all stretched, we have slightly

upped the cash element and at very good interest rates." He said his company had found "substantial support" from Lloyds's shareholders.

Gehe's £584 million offer, made last week and recommended by the Lloyds board, was all in cash and the company's advisers yesterday said they thought this still gave Gehe "a considerable advantage of a much lower cost of capital". They said they were "pursuing this [bid] with determination".

Allen Lloyd, chairman and founder of Lloyds Chemists, stands to be happy whoever wins. He has watched his 7.5 per cent shareholding rise in value to £47.5 million.

UniChem's bid comprises 926p in cash and 16 new UniChem shares for every ten Lloyds shares, valuing Lloyds at 488.5p a share. Its shares surged yesterday by 23p to 493p, while UniChem's rose 8.5p to 247.5p. Repayment of a tax credit for a special dividend of 40p takes the implied gross value of the revised offer to £646 million. UniChem's initial agreed offer for Lloyds valued it at £528 million.

In a separate development yesterday, the European Commission said it was starting a preliminary inquiry into Gehe's plans to take over Lloyds Chemists.

Analysts said that both companies were in some danger of overreaching themselves in their bids for Lloyds, but said that they were clearly worried about being left in a poor third in the chemist market if they lost. Mr Harris said that if UniChem were to lose, the company would continue to grow by acquiring some of the 10,000 remaining independent chemists shops.

Tempus, page 30



Peter Birse, right, and Martin Buddon, finance director

Birse in profit

By MARTIN BARROW

BIRSE GROUP, the construction company, has returned to profit after four years of losses. In the six months to October 31, it earned £340,000 before tax, up from a £680,000 loss in the first half of the previous year.

Peter Birse, the chairman, said: "It is very encouraging to see our principal business in construction making such satisfactory progress in these difficult times as it is the success of that business which will underwrite the

future prosperity of the group."

Birse left private housebuilding in 1995. Mr Birse said: "I look to the future with more optimism than I have been able to do for some time."

Turnover rose by 31 per cent, to £202 million, from £154 million, yielding operating profit of £133 million, against just £270,000 previously.

Birse wants to cancel the share premium account to permit resumption of dividends. The shares rose 5p, to 17½p.

Accountant 'demanded meeting with Nadir'

By JON ASHWORTH

A SENIOR accountant made a frantic dash across London to demand a meeting with Asil Nadir on suspicions that he had been supplied with incorrect financial information, the Central Criminal Court was told yesterday.

Philip Prettejohn, a partner in Rawlinson and Hunter, wanted him to explain an apparent link between two offshore companies and Nadir family interests — an anomaly that gave rise to "considerable concern". Mr Nadir was unavailable, and the meeting did not take place until some days later.

Mr Prettejohn had initially demanded an answer from Elizabeth Forsyth, who had been recruited from Citibank as Mr Nadir's "right-hand woman" on private family matters. Her response was one of "considerable surprise", and she insisted it "must be a mistake" to talk of a link with the companies, Gateway Investments and Riverbridge Investments. She continued to express her surprise on the journey to Polly Peck International's head office in Berkeley Square, London.

Mrs Forsyth, 59, former chairman of South Audley Management, denies two counts of handling £400,000 in allegedly stolen funds during a week in October 1989.

Mr Prettejohn, giving evidence on the fourth day of the trial, outlined a tax structure known as the South Audley Settlement that was created to limit Mr Nadir's liability for capital gains tax. Mrs Forsyth had approached his firm in June 1987 seeking help in setting up a suitable scheme.

Mr Prettejohn told of his need to frequently remind Mrs Forsyth not to interfere with the running of various offshore trusts and companies.

The court heard of conversations with Jason Davies, a stockbroker friend of Mr Nadir's son, who had run up personal debts of up to £350,000 in the 1987 stock market crash. Mr Nadir had given him a job at South Audley Management.

The trial continues on Monday.

Judge is named for Kevin Maxwell trial

THE judge at the next trial of Kevin Maxwell — due to start at the end of the year — is to be Mr Justice Buckley. He is expected to spend the next few months reading the intricacies of allegations arising from the collapse of the Maxwell empire, which have occupied lawyers for more than four years.

An experienced High Court judge, Mr Justice Buckley, 56, is no stranger to complex cases involving allegations of corporate crime. He presided in the 1992 trial of executives accused of corruption in relation to British Rail engineering contracts. At the end of the prosecution case, he directed the jury to return not guilty verdicts. Mr Justice Buckley takes over the Maxwell case from Lord Justice Phillips, now a Court of Appeal judge, who has been involved with it since 1993 and has impressed both prosecution and defence lawyers with his mastery of the issues. He introduced state of the art computer aids into the first trial — which ended in Kevin and Ian Maxwell's acquittal.

Trade Indemnity rises

TRADE INDEMNITY GROUP, the credit insurer being acquired by Compagnie Financière SFAC, of France, for £177.5 million, has reported a sharp recovery in pre-tax profits to £22.5 million in 1995, from £5 million the previous year. The company said that although the 1989 to 1991 underwriting accounts led to underwriting losses, 1992 showed a return to profit for continuing operations and the closed 1993 account has continued the recovery. Earnings per share rose to 9.6p, from 2.2p. A previously declared second interim dividend of 1.4p is payable when the SFAC offer becomes unconditional.

Bank buys housebuilder

ROYAL Bank of Scotland is buying Charles Church, the heavily indebted Surrey housebuilder, for a nominal sum. Church owes banks a total of £40.5 million, including £14.5 million to Royal Bank. The ordinary share capital is being acquired for £130,000. The bank is paying an additional £700,000 for the preference shares and has agreed to take over the outstanding debts of the other banks for £12.8 million. In the year to August 31, 1995, Church made an operating profit of £4.1 million on turnover of £34.7 million.

Burmah sells retailers

BURMAH CASTROL is selling its Turkish and Chilean fuel retailing businesses for £64 million. The owner of the Castrol GTX motor oil brand shed its UK petrol stations in July, and is also in talks to sell its Swedish fuels business. Completion of these deals, including the UK petrol stations, will have generated £150 million for Burmah, which will be left with fuels businesses in Australia, Belgium and Ireland. The company intends to expand in the Turkish market through other distribution channels. Tempus, page 30

Southern Water deal

SOUTHERN WATER, the privatised utility, is acquiring VCHL, a vehicle contract hire and leasing company with operations in Surrey and Kent, for a maximum £13 million in cash and shares. VCHL, which had turnover of £8.7 million in the year to August 31, will be integrated with Topmark Vehicle Contracts. Southern Water's existing vehicle leasing company, The two founding directors of VCHL will continue to be involved with the business.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Clive Thompson, chief executive of Rentokil, has had plenty of experience in pest control. So when he decided to launch a £1.8bn bid for rival business services group BET, it was no surprise that he moved in like a trained exterminator...

Business Focus — The Sunday Times tomorrow

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.13	1.97
Austria Sch	16.91	15.41
Belgium Fr	49.48	45.18
Canada \$	2.21	2.071
Cyprus Cyp	0.759	0.704
Denmark Kr	9.26	8.56
Finland Mk	7.83	8.98
France Fr	6.20	7.52
Germany Dr	2.42	2.20
Greece Dr	354.00	369.00
Hong Kong \$	12.54	11.84
Ireland Ir	1.02	0.94
Israel Sh	5.1700	4.5200
Italy Lit	2548.00	2393.00
Japan Yen	177.10	161.10
Malta	0.594	0.529
Netherlands Gld	2.681	2.454
New Zealand \$	2.42	2.20
Norway Kr	10.47	9.67
Portugal Esc	245.50	228.00
Spain Pta	167.50	158.50
Sweden Kr	11.28	10.48
Switzerland Fr	1.98	1.80
Turkey Lira	39818.0	94218.0
USA \$	1.638	1.505

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

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A WORKING WEEK FOR: CHRIS FARROW

Eastender inspired by spirit of Liverpool

Christine Buckley meets the Londoner ready to walk through a storm for the North's successful docklands reclamation project

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday

THE weather in Chris Farrow's office whistles through slight gaps in a window. From this and its neighbouring windows on the fourth floor of Liverpool's famous Royal Liver Building, he—and the two Liver birds that stand on top of the landmark—can look down on his workplace. For the chief executive of the Merseyside Development Corporation, his office view makes him master of most of what he surveys.

In more clement conditions it is a pleasant vista. But this day it is grim. Rain whips across the grey Irish Sea and the blustery wind brings an oil-rig service vessel into Liverpool Bay seeking shelter. It is returning from the first field off the west coast of England to produce oil. Hamilton Oil started to ship in the fuel late last year from the field, which lies just a little way out from the city.

The service vessel chugs slowly up the Mersey drawing level with the former shipbuilding yard that now bears the repainted name of Cananell Laird. Shipbuilding and one of Merseyside's former major employers has gone, but repair work is keeping some of the yard busy and now that the owner—Coastline Industries—has bought the famous name, the memory of a more prosperous past is kept alive.

To port, the boat passes Brunswick business park, a collection of small manufacturers operating from the reclaimed site of an old quay of the same name. Ahead of it lies a leisure park and housing on land reclaimed from dereliction to stage the city's massive garden festival in 1994.

Immediately ahead of the vessel is the Albert Docks, the luxury shopping and housing development where the vast car parks are sometimes forced to close because they are full. The complex is often held up as the epitome of dock development. It thrives while Tobacco Dock in east London lies forlorn and largely unoccupied.

The Albert Docks are where the Tate Gallery sited its home in the North, which now attracts 300,000 visitors a year and has banished the scepticism that surrounded its opening. Rightly so, believes Farrow, given the appropriate links that Liverpool offers. "Tate was from Liverpool and it was in London Docklands that he and Lyle first came together."

The London Docklands connection is something Farrow shares. He is wearing a London Docklands tie to demonstrate his sympathy and solidarity with the bombed area that he helped to develop as operations director before moving to Liverpool four years ago.

Farrow, an Eastender, effuses about the quality of life on Merseyside. He came North West at the behest of Sir Desmond

Pitcher, the forthright and expansive chairman of United Utilities, who also heads the Merseyside Development Corporation, which sprang into being in 1981 as part of the Government's urban regeneration drive. For the amiable and energetic Farrow, it was a journey into the unknown. "I'd never really been north of Watford before, in all seriousness, so I didn't know what to expect, but we're very settled here." His three children have started to develop slight Scouse lilt, he says, and he and his wife, who works for Liverpool Housing Action, have developed a different social circle.

"In London, the friends we had were in very similar positions to us, there wasn't a large amount of variety in the social circle. But here we have a far more varied social life and mix with a lot more people in industry. People aren't as pigeon-holed," he says. Family life, as well as a jump in professional status, have been the benefits of a move North. "The schools are better and all in all you can afford a much better quality of life."

But they were unknown quantities when Farrow made the decision to uproot. Initially, he was attracted not only by the chance to run the show in Liverpool but also by Sir Desmond's passion for his locale. "He puts a lot of effort into the area. He was born in a council flat here and has never forgotten that. That sort of attitude is typical of many in Liverpool; there is a great desire to get things done. The spirit of the place is very strong."

Spirit is particularly evident in the port heartland of Merseyside. At the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, which runs the commercial port, a bitter dispute shows no signs of ending. Workers from the port, which has had its workforce shrunk from 4,000 to 400, have spent the past four months locked in unofficial dispute with the company over its sacking of 329 men who refused to cross a picket line. Last week, the men rejected an offer of about £25,000 per worker to settle the dispute and demanded their jobs back. Union officials are trying to whip up international support for a blockade of the port.

This week, the company revealed that it had lost £4 million up to the end of last year as a result of the dispute, when it turned in pre-tax profits of £31.7 million down from the previous year's £33.6 million. Gordon Waddell, the chairman, sounded a note of gloom when he commented: "Further intransigence and action on their [the strikers] part will only affect the reputation of the port of Liverpool, and be to the detriment of Merseyside as a whole."

Indeed, the strike is bad news, not only for the men who complain that the speed with which their jobs were re-advertised and filled proved that the sackings were a ploy to deunionise the port, but also for the perception of Liverpool, which had largely consigned its industrial relations difficulties to the past.



Chris Farrow, who admits he had "never really been north of Watford" until this job, has nearly finished overseeing the rejuvenation of Liverpool's waterfront

Farrow is pessimistic about the dispute. "It could go on for ever. This strike is unusual for Liverpool, it isn't about money or conditions. They just want their jobs back." The old image of strikers at Liverpool crystallises the contrast between the newer industries, which are clustering around the old docks, and the city's heritage. Mail-order companies linked to international shopping channels, with staff that speak several languages and an operation that manages to transfer low-cost items from Hong Kong to Norway at a profit, are the newer face of global trade at the port.

Electronic international channels are also bringing in call centres for banks and building societies, with the modest rental and office costs luring many to locate in the North West. The Halifax Building Society opened a call centre recently, while two more financial groups are moving their operations to Liverpool.

This week, Farrow has had talks with companies pitching for the Kings Dock, the latest patch of reclaimed land earmarked for commercial life. It is planned to make Kings a high-tech attraction, with virtual reality expected to play a large part in shaping the development.

The pace at which the spare parts of Liverpool's docklands are being utilised is quickening. In two years, the Merseyside Development Corporation will come to an

end and private enterprise will be left largely to its own devices, without the aid of government resources. A year later, and an end will also come to the £1.6 billion available to the region from Europe's Objective 1 programme, which rebuilds areas of particular need. Between then and now, inward investment is high on Farrow's agenda. Work began last week on Twelve Quays, an international technology campus that is intended to attract overseas pharmaceuticals companies, aided by Liverpool's strong academic record in the discipline.

And as the dull February weather casts a pale light over Farrow's dockside achievements, some of his thoughts are on South Carolina. He is planning a trip there and to New York to follow business leads. He is hopeful of exploiting potential in the US to whom it is easier to market the traditionally troublesome image of Liverpool than to many countries because of the historical and geographical links.

"This role is far more worldwide than that in London. I've travelled much more to market Liverpool, and it is encouraging that the response is increasing. Companies want to come here," he says. Inward investment is not, however, a fast-moving area. Farrow explains that what started as a lunch in San Francisco in February 1992 only recently became a reality when Costco, the discount shopping club, opened operations.

A similar geographical tie that has produced a stream of business in recent times is Ireland. But Farrow is fearful that the bomb that scarred London's Dock-

lands and threatened the future of the Anglo-Irish peace process will affect this connection in the long-term.

Liverpool has opened several food-processing operations using produce generated in the Irish Republic, the economy of which has improved in tandem with the peace in Northern Ireland. "Undoubtedly it has benefited from a knock-on effect of Northern Ireland's economic jump, but there is a cloud hanging over that now."

Liverpool's dock regeneration has created more than 14,000 new jobs and has reclaimed 342 hectares of land and its goal for the end of the development corporation's lifetime is to create the potential for 25,000 jobs. But with that potential clouded by Irish-related events and the threat of a blockade by dock workers at other ports, Farrow must be hoping that the storm passes quickly.

High points of viewing a London house of treasures

Joanna Pitman goes behind the doors of Clerical Medical's main office

Having the good fortune to own as a principal office a 1760s building designed by James "Athenian" Stuart, the contemporary authority on classical Greek architecture, in one of the oldest squares in London, St James's, is one thing. To find that it is filled with fine vaulted and domed interiors decorated in a rich classical style, including a boardroom said to be the finest drawing room in the square, must surely be something more than mere good fortune.

Lichfield House, 15 St James's Square, next door to the London Library, was bought for £12,750 in 1856 by the Clerical Medical and General Life Assurance Society. Founded in 1824 to provide financial services for the clergy and the medical profession, it has since expanded into an international investment and insurance group with £13 billion in funds under management at the end of 1995. But today's clients no doubt hope that its fund managers are as shrewd as their forebears. For Lichfield House today, since extensive renovation in the early 1980s, stands out as one of the finest and earliest British examples of the Greek Revival period in architecture.

The first house on the site was built in 1673 and occupied by Frances, Duchess of Richmond, a beauty of her day known as "La Belle Stewart" for her poise as the model for Britannia on the old penny. In the mid-18th century, Thomas Anson, MP for Lichfield, acquired the original building and, giving new breadth to his interest in Greek and Roman antiqui-

ties, commissioned "Athenian" Stuart, a fellow member of the Society of Dilettanti, to build a new house. Stuart had studied in Rome and had made a series of records of Greek architecture. But the basis of his fame as a classical authority rested largely on his book, *The Antiquities of Athens*, published in 1762.

The house he built reflects his classical taste, incorporating the first example of his use of a Greek temple form for an urban terraced house.

Indeed, Lichfield House is the only surviving example of a domestic facade by Stuart. In the early 19th century, at the behest of Anson's son, the house was enlarged and embellished by Samuel Wyatt and his Staffordshire family of architects and builders. Wyatt devised a series of intercommunicating rooms that stretched through to a stable block in Duke Street. Along with the original kitchen, these backrooms have been replaced by modern interiors fronting on Duke

Street for day-to-day office use by Clerical Medical staff. But it is principally the ceilings to which we must lift our gaze. The boardroom, the former drawing room, occupies the entire three-window frontage. On entering, the eyes are drawn towards the heavily ornamental ceiling, a richly gilded and intricately carved display of classical panache. Rosettes, arabesques and palm leaf designs radiate from the centre. Around them, in an octagonal form, are eight painted panels, each portraying subjects from Greek mythology. These were painted in 1794 by Biagio Rebecca, an Italian who had made a name for himself with work on the interiors of the State Apartments at Windsor Castle.

The former music room, now the committee room, also has a richly decorated ceiling, set off by pale blue and pink that give it a lightness of touch. Around the central chandelier, eight panels frame paintings of dancing and musical figures, believed to be the work of Angelica Kauffman, who worked with Robert Adam.

There remains an impressive collection of original decorative pieces, fluted pilasters, friezes, mirror frames and other ornaments designed by Stuart. A number of these reflect styles used in his work at Spencer House and St James's Palace. But above all, it is the ceilings that capture the attention, being compelling enough to cause dire distraction in Clerical Medical's committee and board meetings if their members are classically inclined.



The boardroom ceiling, a rich display of classical panache

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Hangover feeling as equities fail to shine

THE equity market had that morning-after-the-night-before feel about it as brokers struggled into work after Thursday night's annual Society of Investment Analysts Dinner at the Grosvenor.

Not only did traders lack their normal sparkle, but both share prices and gilts looked a little under the weather. The overnight fall on Wall Street and another early setback for the Dow Jones industrial average in early trading last night put a dampener on events. Traders also had to contend with a worse than expected public sector borrowing requirement and the expiry of the February index options.

The FT-SE 100 index touched an all-time high of 3,791.6 in early trading, but was unable to hold its position. It eventually closed 8.9 points down at 3,770.9 — a rise on the week of 54.6.

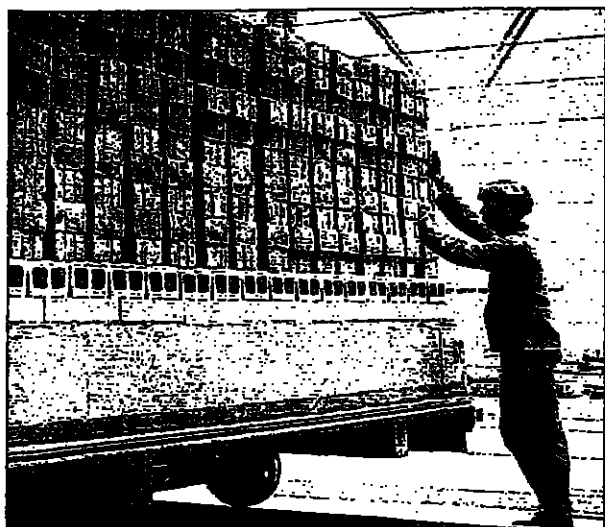
BET was an early feature, rising 1p to 95p after Rentokil decided to strike while the iron was hot. It has launched an aggressive £1.8 billion assault offering a mixture of cash and shares. The terms are nine new shares and 58 cash for every 20 BET shares. There is also a cash alternative of 17p.5p.

BET quickly rejected the bid, describing it as "unsolicited and unwelcome and wholly inadequate". Clive Thompson, the Rentokil chief executive, countered by describing BET's track record as unimpressive, with profits falling under the leadership of John Clark, chief executive. Rentokil lost a further 2p to 333p.

UniChem's higher offer for Lloyds Chemicals lifted the latter 2p to 493p. The new terms are 52p in cash, 16 UniChem shares and an extra 40p cash for every ten Lloyds shares. They value Lloyds at about £617 million, or 475p a share and tops the counterbid from Gehe, the German pharmaceutical distributor, by 25p a share.

The speculators are now waiting to see if the German company will bounce back with a higher offer. UniChem finished 8p higher at 247p.5p.

Bid speculation continued to drive Yorkshire-Tyres Ties a further 1p higher at £10.28 in the wake of Thursday's dawn raid on the shares by free-spirited Granada which can now call upon 24.5 per cent of the equity. City speculators see the raid as the first step



Redland is selling its brickmaking arm but also making a bid

towards a full bid. It will also deter anyone else from launching a bid, giving Granada breathing space to sell the luxury hotels it acquired when it paid £3.9 billion for Forte recently. Yorkshire TV Warrants also rose 1p to 83p, with Granada 3p firmer at 738p.

Still in the same county, speculative buying was evi-

dent, again pushing Yorkshire Electricity higher, with a rise of 8p to 741p. In this trading, a total of 628,960 shares changed hands in spite of recent denials from the company that it had received any bid approaches. Yorkshire is one of the three remaining electricity distributors not to have received a bid.

Farnell Electronics bounced back with a rise of 4p to 62p after going on its 9-for-19 rights issue at 540p. On

sions for bad and doubtful debts.

Brokers appeared to be impressed with the group's underlying trading performance, but the shares ended 6p down at 341p.5p.

News of the bid from Redland lifted Ennemiix up to 35p. Redland, which is selling its brickmaking operation, is bidding 32p a share valuing the entire company at £5.8 million. This is the same price that Redland paid Nash for a 33.1 per cent stake in Ennemiix in December.

Ennemiix last night rejected the terms. It has been hit hard by the depressed building industry, and in the first six months of 1995 incurred a pre-tax loss of £223,000 and passed the dividend. Redland hardened its bid to 41p.

A profits warning left Adwest, the vehicle components group, nursing a fall of 5p to 113p. The group expects to incur operating losses of £1.1 million in the first six months after the disposal of Air-Log and IHW, both loss-making businesses. This, combined with higher interest charges, is expected to result in a drop in pre-tax profits from £6.2 million to £4.6 million.

Birse, the construction group, celebrated its return to the black with a rise of 5p to 17p after weighing in with pre-tax profits of £335,000, against a deficit last time of £678,000. In spite of the continued lack of dividend, the group is more optimistic than it has been for some time about prospects.

GLT-EDGED: The worse than expected PSBR depressed sentiment and deterred investors from opening fresh positions. The worst of the falls was seen at the ultra long end of the market with traders facing up to next week's auction.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt finished a series of bids lower at £108 1/2 as a total of 52,000 contracts were completed.

Among conventional issues, benchmark Treasury 8 per cent 2013 shed 1/2 at 99 1/2, while at the shorter end, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was 5 1/2 better at £104 1/2.

NEW YORK: Wall Street pulled away from the worst levels in bonds in the late morning, but shares remained sharply lower. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was 35.04 points down at 5,516.33.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 5516.33 (-35.04)
S&P Composite 649.23 (-2.09)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 20802.77 (-83.42)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 11994.99 (+123.18)

Amsterdam:
EEX Index 308.56 (+2.60)

Sydney:
ASX 2297.3 (-1.2)

Frankfurt:
DAX 2439.02 (+6.01)

Singapore:
Straits 2453.88 (+14.67)

Brussels:
General 8727.52 (+6.77)

Paris:
CAC-40 1952.30 (+11.17)

Zurich:
SIX 730.70 (+0.30)

London:
FT 30 3770.9 (-8.9)

FT 100 3770.9 (-8.9)

FT 250 4199.0 (-10.8)

FT 350 1879.7 (-2.4)

FT 400 1538.16 (+0.54)

FT 450 1854.25 (-1.98)

FT 500 1954.94 (-2.17)

FT 550 112.73 (+0.14)

FT 600 96.00 (-0.01)

FT 650 36.71

FT 700 204.28 (+1.79)

FT 750 1.5481 (+0.0008)

FT 800 2.2622 (+0.0008)

FT 850 1.1969

FT 900 1.0000

FT 950 1.0000

FT 1000 1.0000

FT 1050 1.0000

FT 1100 1.0000

FT 1150 1.0000

FT 1200 1.0000

FT 1250 1.0000

FT 1300 1.0000

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FT 3050 1.0000

FT 3100 1.0000

FT 3150 1.0000

FT 3200 1.0000

FT 3250 1.0000

FT 3300 1.0000

FT 3350 1.0000

TEMPUS

BET's question of price

THE mud is already flying between Rentokil and BET, prompting a dirty and confusing bid battle. Rentokil yesterday published the performance of BET's management, and the latter hit back with the dreaded "C" word (conglomerate).

The spat between Rentokil's Clive Thompson, and John Clark, head of BET, should prove highly entertaining, but is unlikely to benefit shareholders, and tales of insider dealing are a diversion to the real issues concerning shareholder value.

Rentokil would like to focus on what it believes is its superior management technique, but the bid will ultimately boil down to price. BET has performed poorly over the past five years, but there is a view that the company has begun to put its house in order and deserves more than the current share

price. Shareholders may also be sceptical of Rentokil's claims of synergy. The businesses are similar, but Rentokil concentrates on higher-margin front-of-house services while BET has focused on lower-margin commodity supplies: BET cleans the toilets, and Rentokil services the tropical plants.

In spite of its protestations, there is little doubt that Rentokil needs BET to guarantee the bidder's self-imposed 20 per cent growth rate for another few years. The larger the company grows, the harder it is to find enough small businesses to deliver the earnings kick.

Rentokil can probably make a good fist of running BET, absorbing it with minimum damage to its own balance sheet. However, the £1.8 billion price is an opening shot, and BET shareholders should sit back and wait for a more considered offer from Mr Thompson.

ing a little fuss by Shell on the merits of detergents in petrol, oil companies have virtually abandoned any attempt at differentiating the gallon that goes in your tank.

Nowhere has Burmah capitalised so well on the mystique of the brand than in India where its quoted subsidiary managed to achieve a 36 per cent growth

Burmah Castrol

BURMAH Castrol is justifiably smug about its decision to sell its UK petrol stations to Frost Group last July. Since then, the oil majors have decided to call a halt to the erosion of their market share. For independents like Frost, the net result is likely to be a 50 per cent cut in gross margin and considerable loss of volume as big oil slugs it out with the grocers.

That is history and yesterday's Turkish deal merely confirms Burmah's exit from retailing. More interesting is the continuing focus of Burmah on developing the Castrol brand in fast-growing economies, such as Turkey, India and Vietnam.

One of the great puzzles in the world of marketing is why lubricants have retained their brand mystique for consumers. Notwithstanding

Lloyds TSB

million annual cost savings coming through this year. The real cost benefits will not emerge until a Private Bill in 1997 enables the bank to merge its branches.

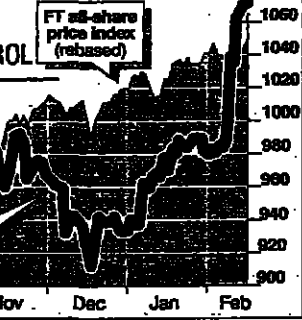
Trading at 13 times 1995 earnings, Lloyds TSB shares are trading at a premium to the sector. However, the cash generation potential of Lloyds TSB holds out the prospect of good dividend growth, justifying the premium rating.

UniChem

YET another bidder is asking the taxpayer to fund the difference between the company's means and the ambitions of its directors. Gross funds and other non-taxpayers who accept UniChem's revised terms can boost the price of the offer by opting for a special dividend of 40p and claim a tax credit of 10p. The special dividend will be paid by Lloyds Chemists and investors not eligible for the extra cash will be paid just 40p

CASTROL'S INDIAN SUMMER

in volume last year. Since India opened up to foreign oil companies in 1992, Burmah has been chasing market share, beating off all the majors and securing 16 per cent. Sooner or later, Western consumers will lose interest in lubricant brands but Burmah has shown there is a big world in the East ready to be taken in.



MOVERS OF THE WEEK

Current	Week's	Change
BET	195p	+58p
Yash-Tyres Ties	102.28	+12.28
Scottish Television	17.45	+1.10
Yorkshire TV	741p	+8p
Lloyds Chemists	493p	+22p
Epsom Hotel Holdings	84p	+18p
Renchur Insurance	126p	+17p
Orion	67p	+28p
William James	43p	+15p

RENTOKIL BIDS £1.8 billion

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COMMODITIES

Commodity	Price	Change
Gold	372.50	+0.25
Silver	15.10	+0.05
Copper	1.10	+0.01
Aluminium	0.85	+0.01
Lead	0.25	+0.01
Zinc	0.45	+0.01
Nickel	0.15	+0.01
Platinum	1.20	+0.01
Palladium	0.80	+0.01
Iron Ore	1.50	+0.01
Coal	0.10	+0.01
Oil	0.20	+0.01
Gas	0.05	+0.01
Wheat	0.10	+0.01
Barley	0.08	+0.01
Rice	0.12	+0.01
Soybeans	0.15	+0.01
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COMMODITIES

Period	
FT-SE 100	Mar 90
Previous open interest: 64295	Jan 90
FT-SE 250	Mar 90
Previous open interest: 3311	Jan 90
Three Month Sterling	Mar 90
Previous open interest: 40454	Sep 89
Three Mth Eurodollar	Mar 90
Previous open interest: 0	Jan 90
Three Mth Euro Yen	Mar 90
Previous open interest: 40497	Jan 90
Long Gilt	Mar 90
Previous open interest: 15454	Jan 90
German Govt Bond	Mar 90
Previous open interest: 25262	Jan 90
Three month ECU	Mar 90
Previous open interest: 24860	Jan 90
Euro Swiss Franc	Mar 90
Previous open interest: 24860	Jan 90
Italian Govt Bond	Mar 90
Previous open interest: 6607	Jan 90

Base Rates Clearing Backs

Finance

MONEY R

Karen Zagor warns that merger handouts carry tax implications

In the excitement of receiving a cash or shares windfall from a building society merger, conversion or loyalty bonus scheme, members would do well to remember Benjamin Franklin's famous adage: "In this world nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes".

The Inland Revenue warns that these handouts will be treated as capital gains and taxed. This applies to everything from shares being issued from mergers and conversions to the cash payouts promised to loyal members of the Britannia.

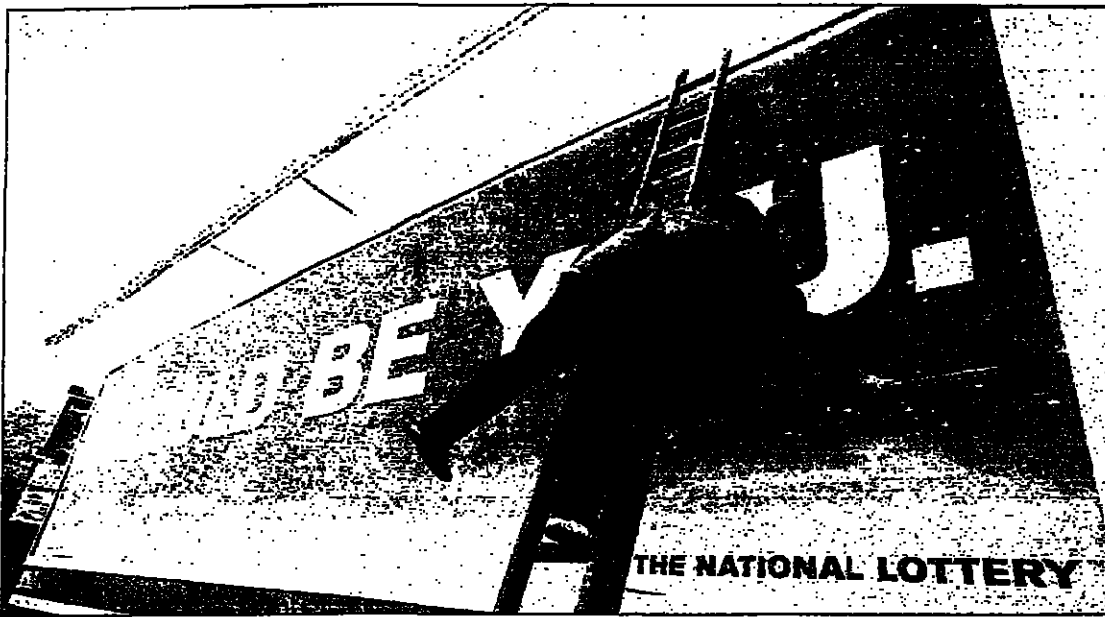
The reason behind the taxation is that the gains — whether in the form of shares or cash — are derived from an asset that you own. As such, you are receiving gains on your capital, and capital gains are subject to tax.

Members can be thankful that their payouts do not fall under the income tax umbrella. For most people, income tax is inevitable. Capital gains tax, on the other hand, is less threatening because the majority of taxpayers do not use their full annual capital gains tax exemption. The CGT allowance for the 1996-97 tax year is £5,300.

Maurice Fitzpatrick, senior tax consultant at accountants Chantrey Vellacott, says: "If you are going to receive shares from a society conversion or merger, then there is no tax to pay when you first get the shares. But when you decide to sell, there may be capital gains tax to pay." As a result, it is important to bear the tax implications in mind when timing the sale of your shares. If you plan to sell the shares in a year when you have already made substantial capital gains, then the tax liability may be greater than any gains from the sale of the shares.

A more pressing problem is that the cash or shares could push you into a higher tax bracket for all or part of the capital gains. "Any capital gains are added to your total income and treated as the top slice," says Mr Fitzpatrick. "If you were very close to

A price to be paid for those windfalls



No gain without pain: members of lottery syndicates could be landed with a liability for inheritance tax

being a higher rate taxpayer, this could tip you over the edge."

Mr Fitzpatrick notes that recipients of free shares do not have the benefit of CGT base costs, which allow a taxpayer to deduct the initial cost of buying the asset from the proceeds, thereby offsetting the gains against the costs. Since members have not had to buy their shares, essentially they have no base costs.

If your newly converted bank decides to reward shareholders with

dividends, these, too, will be taxed. Dividends are usually taxed at 20 per cent at source, but higher-rate taxpayers will have to reimburse the Revenue for the shortfall.

The tax implications of being rewarded for your loyalty through reduced mortgage or higher savings rates are more subtle. A reduced mortgage means the amount of tax relief on your mortgage interest payments (Miras) will also be reduced. Given that interest rates are

very low at present and that Miras has been whittled back to 15 per cent and only applies to the first £30,000 of a loan, most borrowers will gain more from the rate cut than they will lose from the reduced relief.

Savers who get improved rates should earn more from their investment, and investment income is subject to tax. At the moment, that tax is 25 per cent for basic-rate taxpayers. Tax on savings will drop to 20 per cent in April for basic-rate taxpayers

with taxable income above £3,200. Higher-rate taxpayers, with more than £25,500 of taxable income, will have to pay 40 per cent tax on their savings income.

Julie Evans, tax specialist at Pannell Kerr Foster is not convinced that the Revenue is right in imposing capital gains tax on the cash bonus paid to Cheltenham & Gloucester building society members over the merger with Lloyds Bank. "We have been in correspondence with the Inland Revenue and are currently considering the arguments that they have advanced. In the meantime I recommend that anyone liable to pay tax under the Revenue's ruling seeks advice before signing their cheque."

Anyone who fails to tell the Revenue about any capital gain by October 31, or who forgets to put it on their tax return, could face hefty penalties.

Lottery and Premium Bond winners fare better than building society members when it comes to tax. According to a Revenue spokesman: "There is no tax on any gambling winnings." Members of lottery syndicates, however, need to be careful. If the winnings belong to one ticketholder, who then distributes the funds between all the members of the syndicate, there could be inheritance tax liabilities if the winning ticketholder dies within seven years.

To prevent any inheritance tax problems, syndicate members must all agree that any winnings will be distributed by the winning ticketholder among all the members who have contributed to purchasing the tickets. "We do not stipulate that it is in writing, it could be a verbal agreement," a Revenue spokesman said. Without such an agreement, every syndicate member could pay inheritance tax if their share of the pot is more than £54,000. They should also note that inheritance tax is paid, universally, at the 40 per cent rate. The threshold rises to £200,000 in April.

Get in a fix, and stick with it for five years

It is now six weeks into the new season for tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas). Although some of the more competitive fixed-rate accounts have been withdrawn, financial advisers believe some of the remaining fixed-rate Tessas continue to offer a good deal. However, they emphasise that these accounts are only for those who are committed to leaving their money alone for the five-year term of the product.

Alastair Altham, Johnson Fry Asset Managers marketing director, said the rates offered by some providers on their fixed-rate Tessas were higher than the five-year money market rates — which give an indication about what the City believes will happen to interest rates over the next five years. "Some societies appear to be fixing the money at a high rate in order to buy market share," he said.

But he warned investors to be careful of the transfer penalties which are being imposed on some of the fixed-rate accounts. He said: "180 days' loss of interest is not uncommon." Investors who are considering a fixed-rate Tessa should be absolutely sure that they intend to stay invested for the five years, he said.

Clydesdale Bank, for example, is offering a recommended 7.4 per cent fixed-rate account. Those who want to transfer will have to pay a transfer penalty of £30 plus an extra amount which will be based on the difference between the fixed rate and the prevailing rate of interest. Mr Altham said: "The extra cost is for unwinding the fixed-rate deal."

The choice for those interested in a variable-rate Tessa is much more straightforward. Anyone who wants to take out a variable-rate Tessa should get the best rate they can, with the lowest transfer penalties.

When the first range of Tessas was launched, many savers made their choice based on high initial rates offered by banks and societies. Unfortunately, some of these high rates were subsequently cut, leaving investors unable to switch out of uncompetitive products

because of transfer penalties. Among those recommended by both Johnson Fry and by Moneyfacts, the magazine, is the 8 per cent variable rate on offer from the Northern Rock Building Society.

This is currently the highest rate available on the market. If this rate becomes uncompetitive, savers can switch out for £30, although the society could increase this fee.

Mr Altham said: "If you go for one with a low transfer penalty, you can vote with your feet and get out if you want to." Those looking for a new Tessa, should also take into account any bonus that they could be in line for if the society converts or is taken over. Those with maturing Tessas in a society which has already announced its intention to float or be taken over, should remember that any bonus or shares they receive will be based on the size of their balance. These savers are in effect locked in to the society.

None of the Tessas in the best-buy table below are offered by the three societies — the Woolwich, Alliance & Leicester and Halifax — which are in the process of converting. Investors who have never had a Tessa before, or who are not tied in to keeping funds in one of the three societies mentioned, could gamble on putting money into a society which could convert. Those tipped include the West Bromwich, Bristol & West and the Skipton.

A recent survey from Which?, the magazine for the Consumers' Association, found that, based on past performance, building societies paid out £300 more on average than banks. It chose Tessas from some of the smaller societies, such as Dunfermline as "best buys".

Mr Altham said: "If past performance is anything to go by, then some of the better Tessas will ultimately be offered by some of the smallest institutions."

CAROLINE MERRELL

Benefit rooted in days of the housekeeper

Thousands of women are being discriminated against by the taxman, when they are trying to juggle working, bringing up children and looking after a disabled husband. The Government admits that the situation is anachronistic, but this week again obstructed attempts by Parliament to make amends.

Additional personal allowance (APA), which gives tax relief of £1,720 (£1,790 for the coming tax year), is generally claimed by unmarried or separated couples with children and by single parents. It can also be claimed by a married man whose wife is unable to

look after herself due to illness or disability — on top of his married couple's allowance. It cannot be claimed by a married woman with children whose husband is disabled.

"The Government appreciates that it is an anomaly," an Inland Revenue spokeswoman says. "But it goes back to the days when a married man could claim a housekeeper allowance if he had an incapacitated wife and needed to pay someone to look after his children. The purpose of the allowance has been superseded by social security. So the question now is whether the allowance is abolished altogether."

Women looking after disabled husbands are the victims of tax discrimination, Sarah Jones finds

APA, like the married couple's allowance and Miras, is now restricted to 15 per cent. That means between 8,000 and 9,000 working women with disabled husbands are losing £258 a year (£268.50 in the coming tax year). Over a six-year period it could add up to more than £1,500.

This week the Government refused to back an amend-

ment to the Finance Bill tabled by Liberal Democrat MPs that would have given women the same APA as men. A Treasury spokesman says: "The Government believes people should be helped through social security. Tax relief is not an efficient way to help the disabled."

Ken Kelling, of Caring Costs, the charity that has

campaigning for a change to APA rules, disagrees with that interpretation. "There is a strong economic justification for extending APA to women. So many carers have to give up work, thereby giving up pension rights and other means of providing for themselves. The tax allowance would encourage women to combine paid work with caring. That is far better than relying on social security."

As well as the controversy over disabled spouses, there is often confusion over when divorcees with children can claim APA. The rules say that the child must be "resident",

but that does not mean all the time. The child can stay as little as one night a week or alternate weekends and the non-custodial parent can claim APA. The deciding factor is often whether the child has its own room and keeps toys and clothes there.

It is also usually assumed that the allowance has to be apportioned between divorced parents. But where there are two children both parents could claim the full allowance for each child. An unmarried couple living together with their children can claim only one APA between them.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE TAX ALLOWANCES

IF YOUR personal circumstances change — you get married or divorced, turn 65 or 75 for example — your tax allowances will change. However, never assume that the Inland Revenue knows what is happening. It is up to you to tell them.

Everyone is entitled to a personal allowance of £3,795 in the coming tax year. This rises to £4,910 for those aged 65 to 74 and to £5,090 for those of 75 and over, subject to their income not exceeding £15,200 a year. If you are married and living together you are entitled to the married couple's allowance in addition to the personal allowance. The amount is £1,790, but rises to £3,115 for those aged 65 and over, and to £3,155 for those aged 75 or over.

Additional personal allowance is also set at £1,790. Widow's bereavement allowance allows a further £1,790 to be taken tax-free in the year of the

husband's death and in the following year. Blind person's allowance means registered blind people are entitled to an additional £1,250 a year.

The introduction of a restriction on most allowances (except personal allowance and blind person's allowance), to 20 per cent in 1994 and to 15 per cent last year, has meant the words "allowance restriction" have appeared on tax codes. Your tax code basically has two columns. On the left are your allowances. On the right your reductions, which includes allowance restriction.

"Rather than simply reduce the allowance, which would have been politically difficult, the Government has reduced the rate," says David Brodie of TaxAid. "In many ways it is a progressive move, since it has hit higher rate taxpayers the hardest."

If you are a basic rate taxpayer a

married couple's allowance of £1,790 should be worth £429.60 (£1,790 x 24 per cent). But since the allowance is restricted to 15 per cent it is only £268.50. The difference is £161.10. That is multiplied by 100 and divided by 24 to get an allowance restriction of £671.25. It is rounded down to £670. The amount of allowance left in your tax code becomes £1,790 less £670 which equals £1,120. Twenty-four per cent of £1,120 is £268.80, the same as £1,790 at 15 per cent. Similar calculations are done for higher rate taxpayers.

"If you don't understand your tax code and its allowance reduction you should definitely write to your local tax office and ask them to explain," Mr Brodie says.

Tax Allowances and Reliefs is available from your local tax office. TaxAid has a helpline for people on low incomes. Tel. 0171 624 3768.



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Lamentable silence of lenders

For more than two years, Union Finance, a Southend constituency, has peddled its questionable promise that you can escape, without pain, from negative equity.

The firm told thousands of desperate homeowners that they were entitled to claim on the mortgage indemnity policies taken out for their properties. Although this insurance covers the lender, not the borrower, Union Finance asserted that the wording of some policies was ambiguous. Freedom could be yours for a £350 fee.

Weekend Money repeatedly asked the building societies why they failed to refute Union Finance's claims, which encouraged hapless borrowers to hand in their keys in the belief that they could walk off into the sunset debt-free.

But the societies equivocated. Institutions which make much of the support they give to customers in difficulties would not publicly challenge an organisation that threatened to lead such people into deeper misery.

Their silence gave implicit



ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance
Editor

support to Union Finance, leading more people to believe that there was substance to the firm's claims.

Finally, the Bradford & Bingley, as we report on page 37, has used the courts to undermine the Union Finance argument. Thanks to this society's diligence, Union Finance may now face closure. As before, Union Finance losses are full of bravado. Their optimism is in marked contrast to the mood of the clients who took their advice and now face pursuit from their lenders.

Still more evidence will emerge this week of the inability of lenders to speak out, even when this could be in the interests of their customers. A new report will disclose that repossessed bor-

rowers are seldom told that a second-hand market exists for unwanted endowment policies.

If a policy can be sold on to an investor who collects the proceeds at maturity, it will fetch a far better price than the miserly cash-in value offered by the insurance company. The extra money helps to shrink the shortfall between the repossessed property's value and the outstanding loan.

protect the unwary. Lenders should realise that silence is not always a virtue, especially when it causes hardship.

Annuities strife

VOLTAIRE encouraged the elderly to live as long as possible to entice those paying their annuities. He himself contrived to survive until 84. But even if you can live to 89, the provider of your annuity may still have the last laugh.

On January 23, a reader of *The Times* informed Hill Samuel Life Assurance that his spinster aunt had died on January 11. The company still paid out her January pension, a princely £45.31 from an annuity purchased in 1970. But a few days later, it demanded the money back in a piece of bureaucratic penny-pinching that cost more in time and correspondence than the sum involved. When Weekend Money questioned this meanness, it suddenly became a "clerical error" meriting compensation.

Quite right. An annuity ceases on death, not at an insurance company's whim.

Tessa complaints rise

Complaints about delays and inefficiencies in the administration of maturing tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas), as disclosed by *The Times*, continue to mount. Some building societies are being so slow to send out the maturity certificates for their Tessas that savers are missing out on some of the better offers on the market. The procrastination is seen as a cynical move to retain the Tessa funds which, for the banks, in particular, provide a cheap source of funds.

One aggrieved investor is Michael Grey, 80, a London reader who is so angry about his treatment from the West Bromwich Building Society that he has complained to the

Caroline Merrell discovers why a Tessa payout took almost two weeks before it could be reinvested

Building Societies Ombudsman. Mr Grey appeared to do everything in his power to make sure he got the proceeds from his maturing Tessa in time to reinvest in one of the better new deals available. He said: "My Tessa matured on the February 1, so I telephoned on January 29 to tell them I intended to pick up a cheque. They told me I could not do that, and asked me instead to send my account book by registered post, which

I did. I checked to make sure it arrived on time, which it did on 30 January."

"They then said they could not issue a cheque and it had to go through the bank clearing system. I said I needed a cheque, and eventually on the 2 February they sent the cheque." Unfortunately, in spite of being sent by recorded delivery, Mr Grey did not get the cheque until February 6.

Even if this had been in time for Mr Grey to take advantage of one of the better fixed rates available from the Northern Rock, which it was not — the offer closed on February 3 — he would not have been able to reinvest because the West Bromwich failed to enclose any maturity certificates.

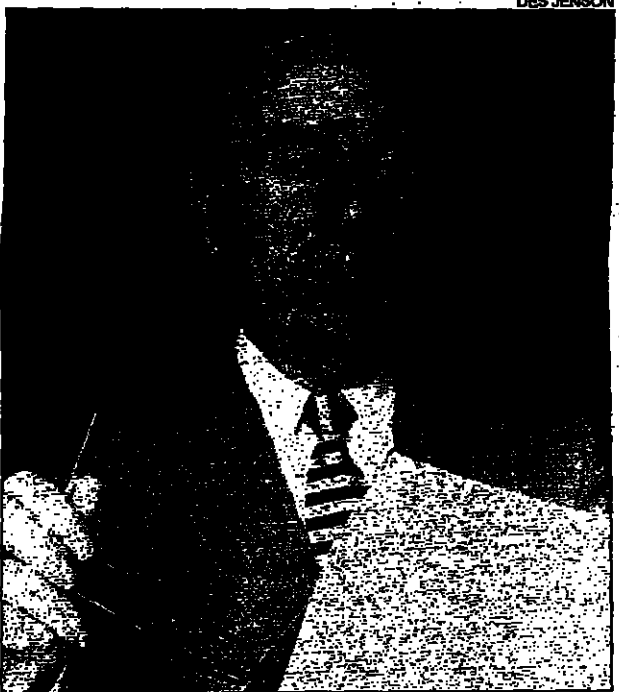
Mr Grey said: "I did not receive my Tessa cheque until February 6, as it will take another three or four days to clear, these people are taking liberties with members of the public." But the West Bromwich defends its actions keenly, saying: "The society wrote to Mr Grey six weeks before the maturity date, February 1, asking what he would like to do with the proceeds."

"On January 30, just two days before maturity, we received his reply which requested that we send him a cheque. For security reasons and speed we prefer to make such payments by BACS transfer."

"Mr Grey then requested that we send the payment by cheque, which we did on February 2." Delays in the post

meant that it did not arrive until February 6. The society only sent out the maturity certificates on February 13, after prompting from *The Times*. It said it only sent them if a customer requests them.

Mr Grey is understandably angry — it has taken nearly two weeks for him to be able to reinvest his money, during which time many good offers have closed. The ombudsman is looking into his complaint.



Tired of waiting, Michael Grey contacted the ombudsman

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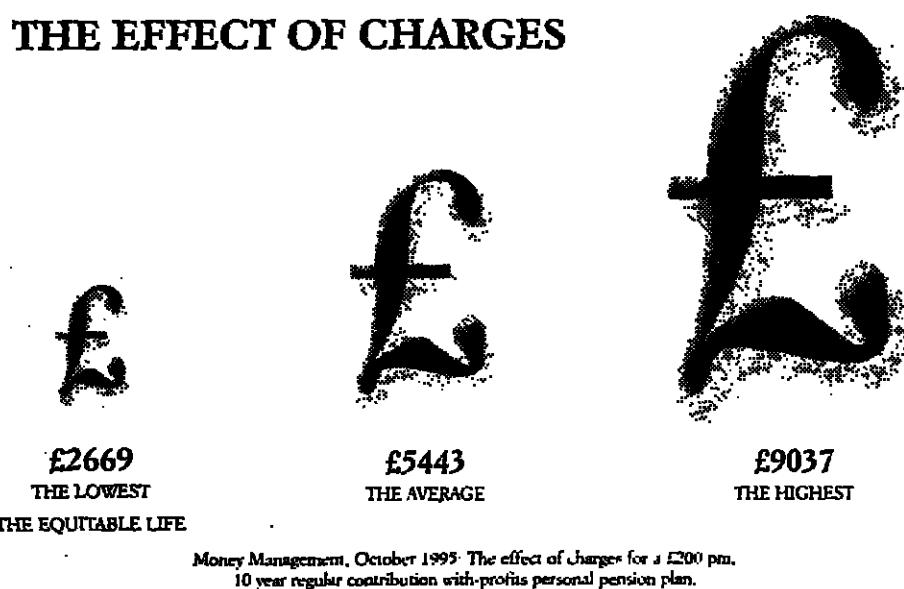
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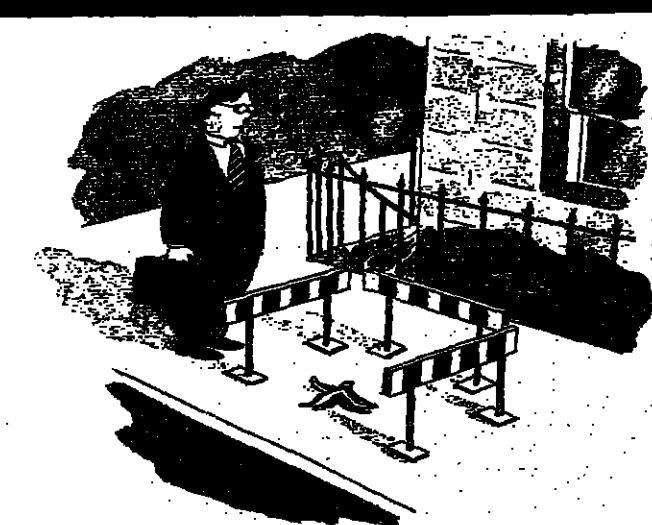
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Janet Bush rehearses the arguments for and against a European single currency

Monetary union: what does it mean?

HELMUT KOHL, the German leader, put his future on the line this week by warning members of the Christian Democrat parliamentary group that he will stand for re-election in 1998 only if he is given full party backing on the single European currency. In doing so, he is hoping to save the European economic and monetary union (EMU), and to restore order among dissidents. Here, Weekend Money looks at the issues, and asks how Britain and its European neighbours would be affected if EMU goes ahead, and where Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, stands on the issue.

Q What would be the advantages of a single currency?

A The architects of monetary union argue that the single currency is necessary to make the single European market work. By having a single currency, those doing business and trading in the single market would avoid the uncertainty and expense of fluctuating currencies. It would also prevent so-called competitive devaluations where one member sought to gain advantage over others,

boosting its export potential through a weaker currency.

Q What are the disadvantages of the single currency?

A The fundamental flaw of the single currency is that the exchange rate can no longer be used as a tool of economic management, leaving policy-makers only with the option of fiscal policy and structural economic measures to influence the economy. The fear of opponents of monetary union is that, without near-perfect economic convergence, the formation of the single currency, existing economic advantage and disadvantage in different countries would become permanent and be exacerbated over time.

Q Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, warns that pressing too swiftly towards monetary union could bring serious political tensions. What exactly does he mean?

A He believes that genuine economic convergence cannot happen within the very tight timetable set by the Maastricht Treaty and that any attempt to form the single currency before convergence would lead to permanent pockets of economic success in some areas of the union, and areas of high unemployment, poverty and underperformance in other areas. This



DAVID LITTLETON

could lead to deepening political problems and even, some have suggested, to war.

Q Where does the British Government stand on the issue of the single currency?

A The Government has come to a compromise stance on monetary union because of deep splits within the Conservative Party between pro-Europeans such as Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a large group of Euro-sceptics on the right. It takes part in the continuing European debate but has chosen to opt out of the single currency — when and if it happens. It has made it clear that there is no question of Britain re-entering the Exchange Rate Mechanism in the near-term and the Maastricht Treaty stipulates that

currencies should trade within normal bands within the ERM for two years before joining the single currency. The British policy is "wait and see" (and hope that the whole experiment collapses).

Q What are the chances the 1999 deadline for monetary union will be met?

A It is exceedingly unlikely that more than a handful of countries will have met the economic convergence criteria laid down in the Maastricht Treaty. It is possible that some countries may choose to fix themselves permanently against the mark in bilateral agreements but this would not constitute the single currency in the sense that it is envisaged in the Treaty. The current debate revolves around whether the Maastricht criteria should be made less strict

to allow a critical mass of European countries to join the single currency. This is vehemently opposed by Germany and Britain among others.

Q If 1999 is met by others, is there any chance that Britain would join a single currency by that date?

A It is, on current economic projections, conceivable that Britain will be one of very few countries to have met the Maastricht criteria. But the decision to join is political and may depend on which party is in power at the time. Labour is less Euro-sceptic than the Government but it is still unclear whether it would choose to join.

Q Could Britain survive outside the system?

A Yes, and would probably thrive.

First 100 days of the euro

David Rudnick on how a switch to new money would affect you

Q Would the pound go out of circulation immediately?

A The pound will not become worthless overnight. It will continue to be legal tender for six months after currency conversion, but for an indefinite period after that the Bank of England will accept sterling notes and coins and change them into euros.

Q The euro would be worth the same as the present basket of currencies known as the ecu — about 80p. But how would people pay for items, such as a packet of sweets, worth less than a euro?

A This is yet to be decided. The euro is likely to be broken into 100 units, like pence to a pound. The European Commission expects the euro to be known colloquially as the pound in Britain, the mark in Germany and so on. Similarly the present penny will metamorphose into a (euro)penny, and the pferling into a (euro)pferling.

Q How would bank accounts be affected?

A High street banks, such as NatWest, foresee no problems. Current account holders will simply have their balance converted to euros (today's rate would be about 1.25 to the pound).

Q That sounds fine, but will the banks quietly pass on the costs of changing

their systems over to the euro (estimated at more than £900 million at 1994 prices) to their customers?

A Banks generally point out that since conversion costs will be spread over a number of years, they will not be particularly onerous.

Q Will homebuyers with mortgages be affected by a changeover?

A A single currency will lead to more competition in mortgage markets. In spite of the persistence of different legal, valuation and land-title systems across Europe. Homebuyers will be able to shop around for better mortgage terms, though UK mortgage lenders compare well on cost and efficiency. On the downside, the European Central Bank is likely to use short-term rates to maintain the euro's exchange rate against the dollar and the yen, and this would hit UK homebuyers disproportionately, since most of us have variable rate mortgages, unlike our fixed rate European neighbours.

Q How will pensions be affected through adopting the euro?

A Private fund holders and those outside index-linked schemes are expected to

benefit from reduced long-term inflation. So will people retiring to Spain since pension purchasing power will no longer be eroded by a weakening pound. The euro will also make it easier for mobile employees living in different EU states throughout their career to obtain fully transferable pension rights.

On the downside, the severe convergence criteria on public debt, which form a key entry requirement to the euro, would, if adhered to, slash state spending on pensions. Private and company schemes may have to expand sharply to cover the growing pension needs of our ageing population. However, pension fund managers voice cautious opti-

mism that adopting the euro would, on balance, enhance the value of UK funds by ending the high currency risk of investing in sterling-denominated assets. Two thirds of UK pension fund assets are in domestic shares, bonds and cash, so the funds and their savers stand to gain from an influx of European money reassured by euro membership.

Q Are retailers preparing for the currency changeover if and when it comes?

A Only the most general thought has been given so far, based in part on recent experience of metrication. Dual pricing of products and conversion tables are likely to be displayed, but the big retail chains are hoping that the day never dawns. Sainsbury's finance director says: "We've got one hell of a logistical headache coming our way."

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Take cover from bomb damage

One week after an IRA bomb ripped through Docklands, the country's biggest insurance companies are making their assessments of the cost of the damage.

Unlike the Bishopsgate blast in the City of London in April 1993, when prestigious office blocks were targeted and the total bill came to £650 million, last Friday's blast affected mostly residential flats. As surveyors pick through the wreckage of the South Quay office blocks, householders in the East End have also been repairing shattered windows and burst pipes. Most residents lived in flats owned by Tower Hamlets council, and so will be covered by the council for any structural damage. But only those who had taken out contents insurance separately will be able to claim for any internal damage to possessions or water pipes.

All household policies for bricks-and-mortar and personal possessions insurance pay out for

damage caused by terrorist attacks, riots, civil commotion, strikes and labour or political disturbances. Those whose homes were damaged in the Brixton riots in London and the St Pauls, Bristol, and Moss Side, Manchester, riots would therefore have been covered if they had an appropriate policy.

The principal exclusions are war and radioactive contamination. The Association of British Insurers says this means ordinary policies will not cover seepage from nuclear waste dumped or buried near your home. Neither will you be covered for risks which seem distant now, but would have been frighteningly real in the 1940s: those of civil war, rebellion, insurrection or a military coup.

With regard to radiation, farmers whose livestock was contaminated by the fallout from the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in April 1986 were compensated by the British Government.

If your car is blown up in a terrorist attack you will be covered if you have comprehensive insurance, but not if you have just third party cover. Most insurers will agree to pay out if you have third party fire and theft cover, although some might argue that a bomb blast was not the same as a fire. However, the ABI says it knows of no disputes between insurers and motorists on such an issue.

If you are injured in a blast and have no personal accident cover or life insurance protection, your only hope of compensation is through the criminal injuries compensation board. Some life policies pay off the mortgage and compensate you or your dependants for any loss of earnings you may incur through death or injury.

As for the policeman who spotted the lorry carrying the bomb and was almost hit by a car flung across the road by the force of the blast, the ABI says he would have been unable to claim against the driver of the car, had he collided with it, because the driver was not responsible for the direction the vehicle was travelling in.

An ABI spokesman said: "Such incidents emphasise the need for people with dependants or with financial commitments to take out some sort of cover in case an accident renders them unable to work."



The aftermath of the Docklands bomb

MARIANNE CURPHEY

Free policy is no accident

Royal Bank of Scotland customers have been treated to a mailshot offering them £1,000 of complimentary accident protection — and the option to buy more cover at "especially economical premium rates".

Several banks have used this gimmick to let their customers know that they do insurance as well as banking. If you die as the result of an accident, £1,000, plus any addi-



tional cover you take out, will be paid to your estate. However, if you are aged 75 to 80, only half of the benefit will be paid. One slight hitch is that your £1,000 will be renewed for a period of ten years at no extra cost — "provided you remain a Royal Bank of Scotland customer".

Additional cover ranges from £285 a month for £20,000 benefit to £855 for £60,000. The mailing makes much of the fact that there is no medical examination.

While it is always important to make sure your dependants are provided for should you die, there may be better ways of spending your money.

Penny O'Nions, a financial adviser based in Amersham, says: "The premiums are certainly reasonable, but then the

likelihood of an accidental death is relatively small, even on the bank's own figures. You are far more likely to die of a heart attack, or be maimed by an accident, still alive, but in a wheelchair. So look at life insurance with accelerated benefits and at critical illness insurance."

The younger you are, the cheaper cover. A 35-year-old woman can get life insurance that gives £25,000 benefit for as little as £5 a month. Critical illness, which pays out if you suffer a serious illness or disability, will cost another £8 a month.

Jane Goodwin, for the Royal Bank of Scotland, says: "The offer is really a freebie. There are no strings attached. Customers do not have to pay anything for the first £1,000 of cover."

Marks out of ten for the mailing? Ms O'Nions says: "No more than four out of ten. It's simply not something I would suggest to my clients because it's unlikely to happen to them."

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Will small investors get fair shares under Crest?

Dealing rules are changing.

Marianne Curphey looks at what it all means

Q What exactly is Crest?

A It is the electronic share dealing system due to come into operation on July 15. It replaces Taurus, the London Stock Exchange's failed project — abandoned in March 1993 after costing the Exchange and the City of London up to £400 million — and Talisman, the current system. It is just about to begin five months of rigorous tests among City market-makers, brokers, institutional investors and banks.

Q Why is it important?

A Under the plan, the Stock Exchange will no longer be the main provider of settlement services in London. It is currently responsible for all share dealings, which involve the physical movement of share certificates.

Q How will it affect me?

A The present Talisman system in effect allows large institutional investors — the giant pension fund managers — to subsidise the dealings of small investors. Private client stockbrokers have protested that every deal of £4,000 or less will be more expensive under the new Crest system.

The Association of Private Client Investment Managers and Stockbrokers argues that 62 per cent of all private client deals are for shares worth £4,000 or less.

Crest will not require investors to abandon share certificates, but those deals that are done using certificates, and smaller deals, will face the biggest increase in charges. For deals under £1,000, the charge to brokers is likely to increase from 75p to between £2 and £4. The basic tariff will not change, which means that it will be cheaper for institutions to use the new system.

Q So how will the charges work?

A One fee will be charged for each transaction. Mark Kirby, of CrestCo, the company set up to design and build Crest, says that because the cost of settlement through Crest is identical, whatever the value of shares traded the tariff will be more or less the same. Small shareholders with nominee accounts may find their broker absorbs the cost of the transaction, although brokers will still charge their normal dealing fee. Investors will also have to



Share certificates will no longer be required for trading under the Crest settlement system.

pay a fee to a network provider to send and retrieve electronic messages through Crest.

Q So the small investor gets a bad deal?

A ProShare, an organisation which lobbies for wider share ownership, says the system will force more private investors to hold shares in nominee accounts — ie, the broker holds the shares in the name of the investor. It says this is because by shortening the settlement period it will become impossible to continue trading in actual share certificates.

ProShare is also concerned that small investors will miss out on the annual reports sent out by the company to shareholders, and that some brokers will charge for collecting dividends and will not pass on perks such as free airline travel or discounted goods. In addition, the broker is legally the owner of the shares, which means that if the broking firm folds, it may be difficult for you to claim your shares. However, if you invest in warrants, which are a type of derivative that behave in a more volatile way than shares, you will not be entitled to dividends anyway.

A spokeswoman for ProShare called for information about the Crest charges to be made public as soon as

possible. "You can put your own name on the Crest register, which will cost £20 a year, but it has to be registered through a broker and so far we have been given no indication of how much a broker would charge for that service."

Q How has it been developed?

A Crest has been the brainchild of the Bank of England and is designed to allow share transactions to be settled within three days.

Q Why is it being introduced?

A Crest is designed to minimise the risk in the settlement system by cutting the number of days between giving an order to buy or sell shares, and the receipt of the

shares or payment for them.

Q What can individual shareholders do?

A Because ProShare believes more small investors will feel obliged to hold shares in nominee accounts, it has launched a code of practice for nominee operators, with the support of the Stock Exchange, the Securities and Futures Authority, brokers and the Bank of England. The code requires a full and clear disclosure of all charges for services; clear disclosure of the way in which investors' assets held in nominee accounts are protected; and for nominees to give investors the chance to receive company information and to exercise as many of the legal rights of shareholders as possible.

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Unhappy client may close debt advice firm

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Sara McConnell looks at the winding-up threat faced by the controversial Union Finance

Unhappy client may close debt advice firm

Union Finance, the controversial Southend debt counsellor, is threatened with closure, leaving thousands of borrowers who sought advice about negative equity hundreds of pounds out of pocket. Borrowers who followed Union Finance's advice that they could not be chased for outstanding debts if they handed their keys back may now be pursued for repayment by lenders.

Ever since *The Times* first revealed the activities of Union Finance in August 1994, the firm's claims have been viewed with increasing concern by lenders and housing advisers.

Union Finance promised to free borrowers from their negative equity by exploiting a loophole in mortgage indemnity policies taken out to cover the loan. It claimed that borrowers could not be chased for any shortfall if they handed their keys back to their lender because the mortgage indemnity policy covered the borrower rather than the lender. It charged borrowers £350 for this advice. Lenders said the advice was wrong and that they would pursue borrowers for up to 12 years. Recent court rulings on mortgage indemnity policies have agreed with the lenders.

Now, unless Union Finance pays an £8,000 legal bill incurred by one of its former clients by the beginning of next month, it will be wound up. An official winding-up notice was published in the *London Gazette* on Wednesday, after the Chancery Division of the High Court in Birmingham refused Union Finance's application to have a winding-up petition overturned.

The petition was served by James Barnett, a borrower with the Bradford & Bingley Building Society and a former client of Union Finance. Mr Barnett was taken to court last July by the Bradford & Bingley, owing more than £55,000. He lost his case that he was protected by the mort-

gage indemnity policy, and incurred £8,000 legal costs, which Union Finance had previously pledged to pay. Union Finance is now refusing to pay them. Mr Barnett, supported by the Bradford & Bingley, served a winding-up petition.

The Bradford & Bingley said it had wanted to have Union Finance's claims tested in court. Andy Hillier, the society's senior manager, loss recovery, said: "There was real concern about Union Finance. But the problem was having the matter tested. Borrowers were grasping at straws (taking Union Finance's advice) and lenders were caught between a rock and a hard place because Union Finance refused to let borrowers talk to lenders."

Bradford & Bingley was the first lender to challenge Union Finance, successfully in the county court. Lenders had previously maintained that they were powerless to act unless one of them went to court. Just before Christmas, the Woolwich Building Society secured a ruling in the High Court rejecting Union Finance's claims, although the case did not concern a Union Finance client. Mark Aynsford, managing director of Union Finance, said this week: "We are waiting to see what's going to happen. It doesn't look good. We've paid out a staggering amount in legal fees."

Mr Aynsford maintained that the firm could afford to pay £8,000, but would almost certainly not do so because this would open the way to "five, six, seven or more other borrowers" to make similar claims that would bring down the firm in the long term.

He insisted that Union Finance was right in its interpretation of mortgage indemnity insurance. In spite of judgments to the contrary, but said: "We have gone down another way. If we go down, we will go down fighting."

How *The Times* reported on Union Finance, John Sheppard, left, and Peter Walker

Where are the 300 successful clients?

Over 300 people, including John Sheppard, have made a series of statements claiming that Union Finance had helped them to get out of negative equity. But where are the 300 successful clients? The answer is in the court. The court has ruled that Union Finance's claims are false and that borrowers who have followed its advice are liable for their debts. The court has also ruled that Union Finance is liable for the costs of the proceedings.

Cover adds up at Union Finance

Union Finance's cover adds up at Union Finance. The firm has been found liable for the costs of the proceedings. The court has ruled that Union Finance is liable for the costs of the proceedings. The court has also ruled that Union Finance is liable for the costs of the proceedings.

The claim to answer prayers of negative equity victims

It was August 1994 and more than one million people, the majority in London and the South East, were trapped in homes worth less than the value of the mortgage. Many had growing families, but could not sell the small one- or two-bedroom starter homes they had bought at the peak of the 1980s housing boom. In spite of having thousands of pounds of negative equity, however, most were not in arrears with their mortgages. They were just desperate to find a way to move and continue their lives.

Union Finance's promise seemed like an answer to their prayers. The firm's founder and chairman, Peter Walker, claimed to have found a loophole in the mortgage indemnity policies most negative equity victims had had to pay for when they took out loans. Lenders insist that anyone taking out a loan for more than 75 per cent of the property's value takes out a mortgage indemnity guarantee (MIG). The borrower pays, but the

policy covers the lender in case it has to repossess and sell at a shortfall. Most of the borrowers suffering negative equity had 95 or even 100 per cent loans, which had compounded their problems. But Mr Walker said sloppy wording on many MIG policies before 1992 meant that they covered the borrower not the lender. It followed, argued Mr Walker and his colleague John Sheppard, that an insurer paying out to a lender cannot then turn and chase the borrower for money it has paid on the borrower's behalf. So all borrowers had to do was hand in their keys and walk away as they could not be chased for their debts.

The firm was besieged with desperate borrowers in spite of hostile press coverage from *The Times* and elsewhere. But what Union Finance glossed over was that its claims had never been tested in court. Lenders said they could and would pursue people who handed in keys and pointed out that they had 12 years to

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PRUDENTIAL

Orange prepares for market

Take a long
view if backing
this phone
firm, says
Karen Zagor

Should small investors back Orange, the mobile phone company, when it floats next month? Orange customers will soon receive booklets on the flotation: customers can register interest in becoming investors by returning a reply slip. They will not, however, receive incentives to buy shares. An Orange spokesman said: "We didn't want to distort a long-term investment decision with short-term incentives."

A paucity of prospectus should be published in early March, with flotation by the end of the month.

Analysts believe that Orange is a good bet. Orange, owned by British Aerospace and Hutchison Whampoa of Hong Kong, is expanding rapidly and there is little reason to expect a reversal of fortune.

Jo Oliver, telecommunications analyst with NatWest Stockbrokers, says: "We're advising people to take up the offer. We believe it could be very rewarding."

There are, of course, risks involved. Share prices are subject to market forces as well as the company's own performance. There is also the danger that Orange's profitability could be damaged by a price war, especially if low-cost provider Mercury One-2-One expands more quickly than anticipated. Cellnet and Vodafone, the two biggest UK players, are already cutting



Ripe for investment: Orange should prove a good bet for long-term capital growth

prices and may introduce more dramatic reductions if Orange threatens to take more of their customer base.

"There is also the risk that the industry will not grow as people are forecasting, or that competitors will come back with a very strong product," says Mr Oliver. "But there is nothing to indicate that this will happen in the short term."

Analysts are bullish on Orange because the telecommunications industry as a whole promises strong growth in Britain in the next decade, and Orange itself is excellent.

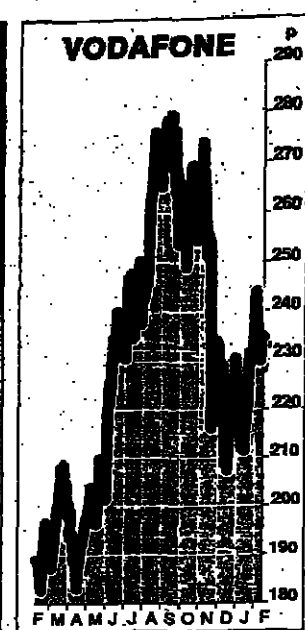
In less than two years, Orange has won 25 per cent of the digital phone market, and its customer base keeps growing. Its February figures show 410,000 customers, against 400,000 for Vodafone in December. Vodafone does not have more up-to-date figures but says it still leads the digital market.

Orange's share of the total UK cellular phone market is a

more modest 7 per cent. Vodafone and Cellnet, which each have a 43 per cent share of the total market because of their huge analogue customer bases, still dominate. Analogue, however, is already considered obsolete. Digital connections are clearer, more reliable, more secure and far more effective in transmitting data.

Orange's digital-only network gives it a strong advantage. While competitors such as Cellnet and Vodafone are now trying to shift their business from analogue to digital, Orange can concentrate on expanding its existing operations.

Unlike Mercury One-2-One, the other newcomer, which has concentrated on building custom within the M25, Orange's strategy has been to expand rapidly through the country. Its network now cov-



Ripe for investment: Orange should prove a good bet for long-term capital growth

annual disconnection (or churn) rate is improving from a peak of 28 per cent in 1994-95, but, at 24.9 per cent, is still high. Orange's churn was 18 per cent in 1995, falling to 16 per cent in the final quarter.

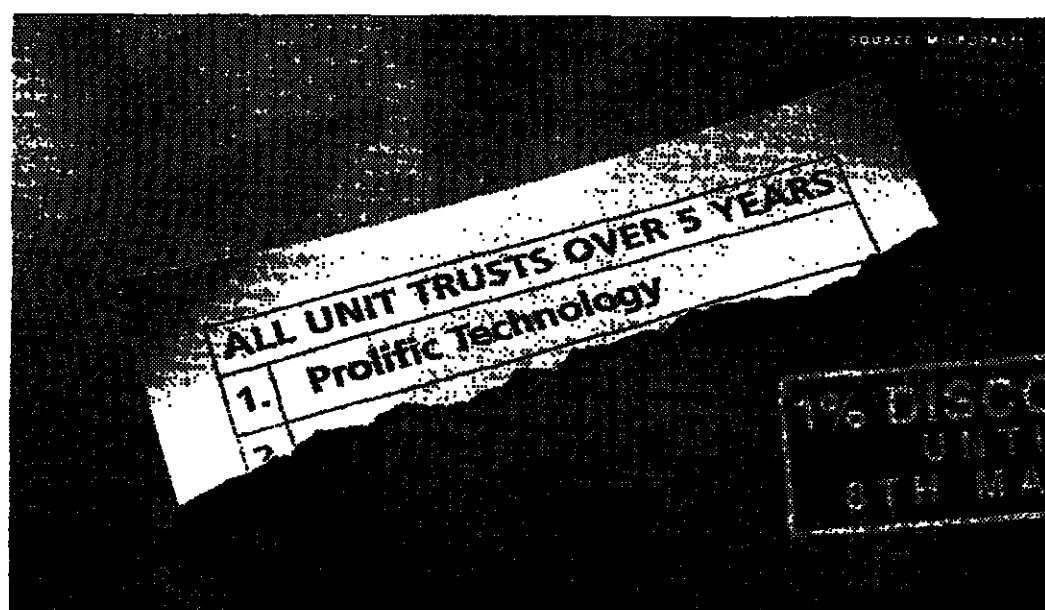
Analysts with ABN-Amro Hoare Govett attribute the below-average churn to Orange's more expensive handset making people think before buying. Orange can control its product through direct selling, unlike Cellnet and Vodafone, which were compelled to use service providers when they were set up. Service providers are responsible for their own tariffs and special offers, not the phone company. This may explain inconsistencies in Vodafone and Cellnet rates.

Orange may find itself at a disadvantage if it needs to grow through expanding beyond Britain. Vodafone already has contracts in 36 countries, but Orange has no presence overseas, although it is currently running a trial in Germany.

Overall, potential for growth in the sector is strong. Britain lags Scandinavia and the US in mobile phone use. Only 0.4 per cent of Britons have mobile phones, against 23 per cent of Norwegians and Swedes. By 2000, the UK figure is expected to be 20 per cent.

Although Orange is a suitable investment for those seeking capital growth, it is not for anyone seeking income. Analysts do not expect dividends before 2000, and NatWest Securities says they are unlikely before 2005. Indeed, the company is not expected to post a profit before 1998.

Non-customers can register interest through a stockbroker or through Orange, whose information line is 0973 100 001.



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Karen Zagor offers some tips to mobile phone users



Women who need a phone only for emergency purposes should consider one with a low rate for line rental

Had the Prince of Wales used a modern digital mobile phone for his late night chats with Camilla Parker Bowles instead of an old-fashioned analogue model, their conversation would have been safe from the prying ears of hackers.

Deciding between a digital and analogue model is just one of many dilemmas faced by a mobile phone buyer. There is such a confusing array of tariffs that it would take weeks with an ordinary calculator to work out the best rate.

Rates are changing so rapidly that it is hard to keep track of them. So it is hardly surprising that a Consumers' Association study found that 38 per cent of mobile phone users were unhappy with their tariff packages.

Part of the problem is that, in order to use your phone, you agree to pay a certain tariff for a set amount of time. Unless you accurately predict your phone usage at the outset, you can get locked into an unsuitable arrangement. The minimum initial contract is usually a year, after which you can cancel with 90 days' notice. The minimum contract, therefore, is effectively 15 months.

Another complication is that Cellnet and Vodafone generally use service providers — or middlemen — who have their own complicated array of charges. If you sign up with a service provider, you are the server's customer rather than the phone company's customer.

Ian White, editor of *Mobile News*, says: "When buying a

On call and on the move

mobile phone, you must do the same amount of research as you would if you were buying a car or a computer. The main cost is the ongoing costs of the calls and the line rental, not the phone itself. You need to think about when, where and how you are going to use the phone. Then go to a specialist high street shop or directly to the network because it is a complicated sale and you need to find someone who will sell you the right phone at the right rate."

Usage: Peoples Phone has a computer system that asks customers about their phone needs and habits, and selects a system to suit their needs. If you are a woman who only needs a phone for emergency purposes — when travelling alone or with children, you want to go for a low line rental rate. Peoples Phone, which provides air time itself, suggests a line rental rate of £11.74 including VAT. Calls are then charged at flat rate of 76p a minute. The choice of phone itself will depend on whether you need a powerful car phone or something small and light enough to slip into a handbag. Phone prices start at 99p. The average price of a decent analogue phone is about £50. At the other extreme is the

digital tariff for the high user. Peoples Phone suggests monthly line rental of £58.75 including VAT, which includes a free call allowance of £25.20. Peak charges are 20p a minute, off-peak are 8p a minute. The phone can be used throughout Europe. Orange charges £50 a month for its Talk 200, which includes 200 minutes of free airtime. Peak charges are 18p a minute, off-peak are 9p a minute.

Clarity: The quality of mobile connections is improving, and digital connections can be very clear, but it is important to remember that a mobile phone is basically a radio transmitter. "You don't expect your car radio to work in tunnels, so it isn't fair to criticise mobile phones for not working in lifts," says Mr White.

Privacy: If privacy is paramount, a digital phone is the best choice. The digital technology automatically scrambles the conversation while you speak, making it safer than a land-line, whereas conversations on an analogue phone can be picked up easily.

Counting the minutes: Orange has always charged calls by the second instead of

rounding up to the nearest minute or half-minute, which was the traditional charging pattern for Vodafone and Cellnet. Vodafone and Cellnet have recently cut prices, but the lower rates are only available to a small proportion of customers who have digital phones.

Getting the message: Messages are another area where charges vary wildly. Vodafone charges 33p to leave and 25p to retrieve a message. Orange charges 75p to retrieve messages, while Mercury One-2-One usually charges nothing.

Charging your friends: It costs 35p a minute to ring a Vodafone or Cellnet number from a fixed line. Orange sets the charges at 14.2p a minute.

Mobility: If you need a phone for travel, it is no good signing up with a low-cost provider and then discovering that the phone does not work two miles beyond your home. Orange has a good range within the UK, but cannot yet be used abroad. Vodafone, on the other hand, has arrangements in 36 countries. Mercury One-2-One is strong within the M25, but has fairly scant coverage beyond.

Flexibility: If you are worried that your phone needs might change over a year, look for a flexible provider. Peoples Phone, for example, allows you to switch to a different tariff package while still under contract. Orange allows customers to switch if the original tariff is unsuitable.

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Wake up your lazy money!

Get your savings working harder with our high income, corporate bond PEP

7.6% TAX-FREE INCOME

How much return are you getting on your savings? With an Allied Dunbar Extra Income PEP you can currently make 7.6%* per annum. And every penny of that income will be tax-free.

That means if you invested the maximum of £6,000 now in our Extra Income PEP your money could earn £456 in just one year. But check the average interest rate now paid by the three building society deposit accounts quoted below; you could only expect to make £276. After tax (at the basic rate), you're left with just £204.

	GROSS INTEREST RATE	AFTER BASIC RATE TAX	AFTER HIGHER RATE TAX
Nationwide	4.7%	3.5%	2.1%
Woolwich	4.8%	3.4%	2.1%
Halifax	4.5%	3.3%	2.0%
Allied Dunbar Extra Income PEP	7.6%	7.6%	7.6%

With all corporate bond PEP's, the value of your investment and income from it can fall as well as rise and is not guaranteed. The above building society information refers to interest rates for deposits of £10,000 - £24,999 held in 90 day accounts.

So far, so good. But watch out — with some other corporate bond PEPs you'll find that, even though the taxman won't be eating into your income, the high charges of the PEP provider may well be.

Our charges are exceptionally low, which means that the money in your Allied Dunbar Extra Income PEP will be working very hard — for you.

Of course, you won't want to start moving your hard-earned savings anywhere new until you know a lot more about what you're getting into. We've compiled a detailed information pack on the Allied Dunbar Extra Income PEP to help you make an informed decision. If you think it's about time your money started working a little harder, phone us now on 0800 888 666 for your free pack and application form.

Call free for an application pack on **0800 888 666** Any time between 7am-10pm, 7 days a week.

For the life you don't yet know

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OFFER CLOSES 3.00PM 29TH FEBRUARY

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PEP for 95/96 and 96/97 tax years is
now available for a limited period only.**

- NO INITIAL CHARGE
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It provides an opportunity for you to invest your 95/96 £6,000 tax free PEP allowance for the current tax year and a further £6,000 for the 96/97 new tax year.

To: The M&G Group, Bristol BS38 7ET. Please send me details of the new M&G Equity Investment Trust PEP.
NO SALESMAN WILL CALL.

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Act before 3.00pm 29th February

Morag Preston says

post offices are
planning to be
the supermarkets
of the financial world

When a local bank closes in a high street or a rural community, the Post Office is often the only financial institution left, providing customers with a wide range of services from Girobank to National Savings. In the UK, there are around 19,400 post offices, each acting as a safe house for customers' finances and a place from which to receive pensions, savings stamps or motor vehicle licences. Only 45 per cent of parishes in England are without a post office, compared with 90 per cent that survive without a bank or building society, according to a survey by the Rural Development Company.

Between 1991 and 1995, however, the number of rural post offices fell by 4 per cent, to about 10,000. On Valentine's Day last year, the National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) called on the Government to halt the closure of rural sub-post offices, which it said were an "essential life-line" for millions of people.

Of the CAB clients surveyed, 70 per cent were receiving state benefit, more than one third were without a car, and a quarter did not have a bank account. Almost half of those questioned said they paid at least one of their household bills at their local post office.

Last year, Girobank, which is owned by the Alliance & Leicester Building Society, processed 7.5 million transactions weekly and handled more than £64 billion of business takings, equivalent to £1 in every £4 that passed through a UK till.

Girobank is unique among UK clearing banks in having direct links with 16 countries in the international Giro network, including most of Western Europe, Scandinavia and Japan. As well as providing Giro cheques on behalf of the Benefits Agency, its business services include Transcash, used for collecting mail order, rent, gas, and electricity payments.

Girobank Keyway, an interest-bearing current account, offers 0.5 per cent gross on deposits of more than £1, rising to 0.75 per cent on more than £2,000 and 1 per cent on £5,000 plus. The interest rate on Linksave, the plastic card-based account, is 0.35 per cent gross on between £1 and £499, 0.85 per cent on £500-£1,999, and 2.10 per cent on £2,000 plus.

Overdrafts with the Girobank Current Account are charged monthly at 0.99 per cent net if they are authorised, and 2.2 per cent if they are unauthorised.

There are around 1.2 million Alliance & Leicester Giro customers. They do not count as members of the society, so will not benefit from the free shares to be distributed at flotation, unless they also hold Alliance & Leicester qualifying share accounts or mortgages.

Treasury-backed National Savings are another popular service available at the



Those were the days: there were more post offices but fewer services

post office. By March last year, 14 million deposits and nine million withdrawals had been made through National Savings, which offer a wide range of services, including Capital Bonds, Pensioner Bonds, Children's Bonds and Income Bonds. Basic National Savings certificates pay 5.35 per cent tax-free, and are guaranteed if held for five years.

Ordinary accounts start at £10, and go up to £10,000. Investors have instant access, and the first £70 of annual interest is tax-free. The interest rate is 1.75 per cent gross on less than £500 and 2.75 per cent gross on sums greater than that if the account has been open for longer than a calendar year. Investment accounts start at £20 and go up to £100,000. The taxable interest rate is 5 per cent gross on less than £500, 5.5 per cent on £500 plus, and 5.75 per cent on £25,000 or more. The rates change according to the base rate.

The Post Office is also becoming a leading player in the travel market, offering certain foreign exchange facilities from its "one-stop holiday shops" since

last year. Around 3,000 post offices sell travel insurance, including 600 larger outlets that provide a full range of on-demand bureau de change facilities at a lower rate than that offered by most high street banks. Customers can use their credit cards to pay for foreign currency and travellers' cheques, in addition to being able to order currency from smaller offices. Ten-year passports can also be ordered through main branches. The agreement to give Post Office Counters greater freedom follows the Government decision to abandon the privatisation of Royal Mail and Parcel Force. It enables the Post Office, through 4,000 branches, to act as one of the biggest sellers of National Lottery tickets.

Over the next few years, the Post Office will install computer terminals to link its network, with the aim of £150 million from new business before the year 2000. By then, customers could be popping into their local branch to cash in money-off coupons, access mobile telephone services, pay for travel and theatre tickets, and even motorway tolls and parking schemes, says the Post Office.

Who really needs a Saints PEP?

As an introduction to tax free savings TESSAs were great. Over the last five years they have provided a high level of tax free interest and total capital security.

But over the same period an investment in the stock market would have given you an even better return.

Typically £1,000 invested in the average TESSA in 1991 would be worth £1,525 now*, but a similar investment in a New Saints PEP would have grown to over £2,000.*

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Saints (The Scottish American Investment Company PLC) is a £500 million international investment trust. It has an excellent income record having paid a rising dividend every year for the last 22 years. Its current yield is also 70% higher than the average general trust*.

You can invest in a Saints PEP, and like a TESSA, you'll pay no tax on your returns.

Saints is a great way into the international stock markets thanks to its diverse range of investments and broad spread of risk. That's not to say you should invest all your funds into Saints - shares are more risky than deposits - but a TESSA combined with a New Saints PEP for its stock market returns may be just the solution.



**I've done well with
my TESSA. Now I want
stock market performance
with a tax free
New Saints PEP.**

Low Charges

Investing in a New Saints PEP is cheap and simple. An annual charge of £25 plus VAT and stamp duty is all you pay irrespective of the size of your investment. The costs incurred by Saints managing your investment are less than 0.75% of assets per annum.

Flexibility

Saints is totally committed to the private investor. Over 20,000 own shares and many have built up their holdings through regular saving or investing lump sums.

Whatever your reason for saving you'll find a New Saints PEP an ideal solution. Unlike a TESSA, if your circumstances change, you can increase your savings or access your money whenever you need it.

To find out why you really need a New Saints PEP, complete the coupon or call us free, but hurry we need your application by 29th March for the 1995/96 tax year.

FREE 0800 567 100

To Stewart Ivory & Company Ltd
Freeport EH33Z,
45 Charlotte Square,
Edinburgh EH2 0DR

Please send me details of the New Saints PEP

Name	
Address	
Postcode	



An International Investment Trust

Saints is managed by Stewart Ivory & Company Ltd which is regulated by IMRO

Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. The value of your investment, and the income from it, may fall as well as rise and you may get back less than you invested. Personal taxation rates and the tax treatment of PEPs may change in the future.

*Source HSW TESSA Sector Index to 11/1996. *Source AFTC share price performance, dividends reinvested to 30/11/1995. *Source BZW, 26.12.1995.

Has your TESSA matured? Whatever next?

Around 2 million people invested in a TESSA early in 1991. If you're one of them, congratulations. You may have already received - or be about to receive - an attractive tax-free payout.

And you may be thinking that re-investing the capital from your matured TESSA in a new TESSA is the best decision to make now. After all, you have done well with this form of investment over the past 5 years.

But just stop and think. Things have changed since 1991. Interest rates, for example, are currently far lower - with no short-term prospect of an increase. Different kinds of tax-free investments, such as PEPs, have been introduced and developed. And in any event, changes in your own circumstances and outlook could mean that a new TESSA may not be the ideal choice for you. But even then, you'll need to decide how best to use the tax-free interest you have accumulated, since you may re-invest your capital in a new TESSA.

So what really is best for you?

There are no "off-the-peg" answers to this question. You should consider the alternatives carefully - with full regard to your overall financial position. And this is where ProVision can help.

ProVision is a different kind of financial planning service, designed to help you make the right choice, as part of a personal analysis of all your financial affairs. Only Clerical Medical products will be recommended where appropriate to your needs, and we guarantee not to put you under any obligation or "hard sell" pressure. And rest assured: if we think that investing in a new TESSA is the right choice for you, then that's precisely the advice we'll give you.

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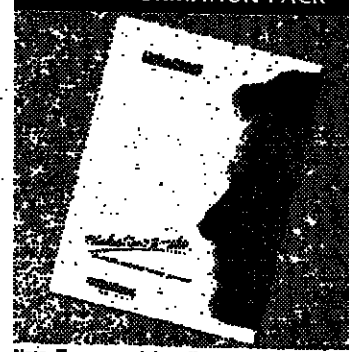
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London: 020 7111 4100. Enquiries to: Special Needs Office, Narrow Plain, Bristol BS2 0AB. Regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO. A member of ABL Clerical Medical Investment Group comprises Clerical Medical and General Life Assurance Society and its subsidiaries who together market a wide range of savings, investment and pension products.

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- make sure that your savings and investments are in line with your long-term goals
- strike the right balance between risk and potential reward

FREE INFORMATION PACK



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Robert Miller examines Micropal's survey of 140 trusts launched last year

How the newcomers performed



New Pep plans and babies abound in the spring

The prospect of an early cut in interest rates, after the Bank of England signalled on Wednesday that the Government was back on course to meet its inflation target, is good news for unit trust managers.

Savers, who outnumber Britain's ten million mortgage borrowers by five-to-one, will have to consider seriously whether they can get a better return for their money, either in capital or income terms, elsewhere. Unit and investment trusts offer the most suitable exposure to equities because they provide a spread of risk. That does not mean, however, that they eliminate it.

New unit trusts launched generally abound at this time of year, with the run up to the end of the tax year on April 5 being linked with making the most of your annual £6,000 personal equity plan (Pep) allowance.

This year, there is even more to play for with the extra billions of pounds in profits from matured Tassas to be reinvested. But about now, investors, many of them first-timers, who helped to push the value of funds under management in unit trusts last year through the £100 billion barrier, and swell the number of unitholder accounts to nearly seven million, will be wanting to know how their money is faring.

In a special survey for Weekend Money, Micropal has tracked the fortunes of last year's 140 new trusts. On the basis that most unit trust investments should be embarked on with at least a three-year time view, it is unfair to read too much into a relatively poor performance at the outset. There is also the inevitable charging handicap to overcome, although some trusts now carry no front-end load. And it could be that the particular stock markets or geographic regions you have chosen had a rough time. Nevertheless, the minimum

performance yardstick by which you can measure your trust at any time is whether it is at least matching and preferably beating similar trusts.

By far and away the most popular type of trust to be launched last year was UK gilt and fixed-interest funds, boosted by the debut of the new-style corporate bond Peps. Of the 36 newcomers, only Fleming's two Select bond trusts have produced consistent profits since launch. But a number of others have beaten their sector average, or, as has been the case so far this year, limited the loss. Those that have matched or beaten the generally accepted performance benchmarks include Clerical Medical's Extra In-

come, Virgin's Income, Scottish Amicable's Corporate Bond, Murray Corporate Bond, Hill Samuel's Managed Extra Income, Allied Dunbar's Extra Income and Cazenove's High Income Portfolio.

In the UK Equity Growth stable, the star among the 13 new trusts is Halifax's Growth trust which in the year to February 1 is up 23 per cent, against an average sector profit of £20 for every £100 invested. In all cases charges have been taken into account. Also showing a steady profit since launch is Marks & Spencer's UK 100 Companies trust, which has made up for periods of not quite matching the sector average by showing

a 1 per cent profit so far this year against an average loss of more than 3 per cent for other trusts.

Richard Branson's Virgin again showed a credible performance with its UK Index Tracker trust in the UK Growth and Income sector. It is up more than 18 per cent since May last year and is closely followed by Baillie Gifford's British 350 trust. In the UK Equity Income category, Halifax Income is up 23 per cent since May last year.

Those investors who went for a double-risk averse strategy by investing in unit trusts that in turn invest in investment trusts will have been disappointed. Neither Abrust's Fund of Investment Trusts nor Dunedin's Innovations have even matched the sector average for similar trusts. Abrust, for example, is up 3.73 per cent since May against an average performance of 10 per cent.

On the International Equity Growth side, Abbey's Global Opportunities was the star performer, with profits over every period measured since May 1. The managers most pleased with themselves will be those who went for North America. The four new trusts from Fleming (2), Schroder and Jupiter have not only all been in profit since launch but they have also managed to more or less match the sector average and in some periods actually beat it.

The Far East, excluding Japan, also produced some handy profits. Among the seven newcomers last year, the stars were Friends Provident's Asian Growth and Britannia's Pacific Growth trusts. Emerging Markets, once a favourite theme for new launches, produced only three trusts, from Abbey, Hill Samuel and again Fleming. All three have comfortably outperformed similar existing trusts.

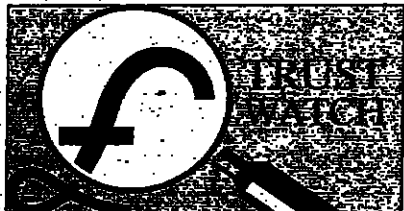
group's Select umbrella fund. The Guinness Flight newcomer will be managed by Nerissa Lee from Hong Kong. Hill Samuel (0800 336600) is offering its first investment trust based on UK Emerging Companies, with a market capitalisation of less than £100 million. After a slow start, the number of groups launching new-style Venture Capital Trusts, which offer Pep-type tax breaks for investments held for five years, has increased quite dramatically. Among the latest to join the VCT club are Close Brothers (0171-426 4000), Gartmore (0800 212 433) and Hodgson Martin (0131 226 7644).

ROBERT MILLER AND JENNI PATTISON

Plenty of variety on offer to investors

The latest batch of new trust launches offers plenty of variety for investors. Leading the parade is Fleming (0500 500 161), the UK's largest investment trust manager, with a Worldwide Income investment trust in which investors can use their £6,000 personal equity plan allowance for the current tax year and then again for the next year after April 6.

The Fleming trust will have a split-capital structure with two share classes: Ordinary Income and Zero Dividend Preference or a package of the two in a unit. Up to 60 per cent of the trust will be invested in UK equities, up to 30 per cent in high-yielding bonds, principally emerging market debt, and the remainder in international shares. Also on the invest-



ment trust income theme is a new Pep linked to the High Income trust run by Abrust (0800 136 734) and a similar Pep tie-up from Exeter's High Income unit trust (01392 412144).

On a different tack, Guinness Flight (0345 564564) has launched a Dublin-based China fund, a sub-fund of the

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Investment of £1,000 in December 1945.

	Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust PLC†	Higher Rate Building Society Account*
1945	£1,000	£1,000
1970	£30,269	£2,554
1985	£191,470	£8,489
1995	£1,017,116	£17,548

With its combination of performance, choice and low costs, it offers better value than any other savings and investment plans available. You can choose from our wide range of investment trusts, changing

the frequency and the amount you invest without penalty. While the real value of money has decreased by over 35%, £1,000 invested in Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust ten years ago would have grown to over £5,000.** Why not find out more?

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The value of shares and the income from them can fall as well as rise and you may not get back the full amount invested. Past performance is no guide to the future. All figures to 31 December. ** 31.12.85 to 31.12.95. *Basic net rate to 1982 - source BZW. Thereafter highest net rate available from Micropal (£25,000+ Account), based on total return, net income reinvested. **Source Foreign & Colonial Management Ltd using mid-market prices, net income reinvested, incl. historical 3.5% national expenses. Plan charges 0.2% commission excl. 0.5% Govt. stamp duty. Foreign & Colonial Management Ltd (regulated by IMRO and the Personal Investment Authority) or its subsidiaries are the Managers of the investment trusts.

Planning for retirement? Who can you trust with your money?

A retirement lump sum is often the biggest single amount of money people ever have to invest. It is vital for everyone in these circumstances to shop around before entrusting an adviser with their money. Mistakes can easily be made and the time to recover from making the wrong choice is limited, as many older investors have learned to their cost.

In Carr Sheppards' view, what people need in order to start sensible financial planning for retirement is impartial professional advice. As long-established private client stockbrokers, with some £2 billion of individuals' capital entrusted to our care, we are well qualified to help you. Our long experience is encapsulated in our booklet 'Enjoying Life After Work', and many people who have read it have found it most helpful.

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The award winning expertise of both groups are at the disposal of all existing and future investors.

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- Edinburgh UK Smaller Companies Fund, Micropal 10 Year Unit Trust Award, 1982, 1993 and 1994 ③

DUNEDIN FUND MANAGERS

- Dunedin Enterprise Investment Trust plc, 1st place, Five Years Investment Trust, Venture and Development Capital Sector, Micropal Awards 1994 ④
- Dunedin Enterprise Investment Trust plc, Most Improved Investment Trust Share of the Year, What Investment 1995 ⑤

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*The merger is subject to certain conditions being met including regulatory and shareholder approval.

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THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Peps put into the spotlight

The Association of Investment Trust Companies, representing the interests of the investment trust industry, has updated and reissued three of its factbooks. *Investment Trust PEPs* looks at the different types of personal equity plans available and explains the rules relating to investment trusts over PEPs. The factbook identifies the benefit in combining an investment trust, offering long-term performance and spread of risk, with a tax-free PEP. Although investment trusts for children may not seem an automatic choice, *Investing for Children* reveals their inherent advantages, including the absence of a front-end commission when carrying out the initial purchase. *Planning for School Fees* highlights the tax efficiency and flexibility of investment trusts over with-profits endowment policies when saving for education. These factbooks are available free from AITC on 0171 4315222.

Kilik & Co, the stockbroker, has produced a five-page guide to understanding PEPs. The guide answers the questions most frequently asked by investors and explains in particular the benefits of unselected (self-select) PEPs ver-

sus "restricted" general and single company PEPs. Questions answered include: "What does it cost to open a PEP?" and "Can more than one single company PEP be merged into one PEP?" A thousand copies of *A Guide to Understanding PEPs* are available. Contact Kilik & Co on 0171 4614400.

More than 90 per cent of road accident and work-related personal injury claims are successful, according to the The Solicitors Trust, a national network of local solicitors that has produced the second in a series of factbooks on legal topics. *15 Facts you Need to Know about Personal Injury* includes information against medical negligence and compensation for victims of crime. Call 0990 112322.

Halifax Building Society has introduced new interest rates on its range of savings accounts. The new rate for a Liquid Gold account holder with £10,000 in his or her account is 3.60 per cent, compared with a previous return of 3.75 per cent. For a Bonus Gold saver with £10,000, the rate is now 5.25 per cent.

LIZANNE ROSE

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME			
Rates as at February 14, 1996			
Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)	
1 Year			
5,000	AIG Life	4.65	
10,000	AIG Life	4.75	
20,000	AIG Life	4.85	
50,000	AIG Life	5.00	
2 Years			
5,000	AIG Life	4.93	
10,000	AIG Life	5.03	
20,000	AIG Life	5.18	
50,000	AIG Life	5.33	
3 Years			
1,000	Premium Life	4.50	
5,000	AIG Life	5.02	
10,000	AIG Life	5.22	
20,000	AIG Life	5.33	
50,000	AIG Life	5.42	
4 Years			
1,000	Premium Life	4.70	
5,000	Prudential	5.20	
10,000	Prudential	5.50	
20,000	Prudential	5.50	
50,000	Prudential	5.50	
5 Years			
1,000	Premium Life	5.10	
5,000	Prudential	5.20	
10,000	Prudential	5.50	
20,000	Prudential	5.50	
50,000	Prudential	5.50	

Source: Chamberlain de Bro (0171) 434 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

SAVERS' BEST BUYS

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Portman BS 01202 282444	Instant Acc	Instant	£100	4.80 Y/y
West Bromwich BS 0345 374121	Dir Instant	Postal	£20,000	6.00 A/y/y
West Bromwich BS 0345 374121	Dir Instant	Postal	£25,000	6.25 A/y/y
West Bromwich BS 0345 374121	Dir Instant	Postal	£50,000	6.50 A/y/y

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Cheltenham & Glouce 0500 246810	Direct 30	30 day p	£1,000	6.50 Y/y
Cheltenham & Glouce 0500 246810	Direct 30	30 day p	£10,000	6.75 Y/y
Cheltenham & Glouce 0500 246810	Direct 30	30 day p	£25,000	7.10 Y/y
Alliance & Leic BS 0116 271 7272	Prime 90 Depos	90 day	£100,000	7.20 Y/y

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Yorkshire BS 0800 378836	5 year	£9,000	7.30 F/y/y	
Allied Trust Bank 0171 8260878	5 year	£9,000	7.25 Y/y	
Cheltenham & Glouce 0500 246810	5 year	£9,000	7.25 Y/y	
Principal BS 01222 344188	5 year	£25	7.25 Y/y	

CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

Card type	Interest per month	APR%	Fee per annum
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	0.94%G	12.10% Nil C
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	1.00%	14.60% £12
Royal Bank of Scotland 0800 161616	MasterCard	1.14%	14.50% Nil C

PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

APR	Monthly payment on £3,000 for 3yrs with insurance	Monthly payment on £3,000 for 3yrs no insurance
Direct Line 0141 2489966	14.90%K	£114.41
Midland 0800 180180	15.40%	£116.54
Abbey National 0345 545555	15.50%	£115.18

Nb. A = 2% bonus if Account opened by 30.4.96. C = No interest free period. D = For debt consolidation only. E = Available to comprehensive motor insurance policy holders over 22 years. F = Fixed Rate (all other rates variable). G = Annual rate 5% above R. R = Bank base rate. OM denotes interest paid on maturity. P = By Post only.

* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

Source: Moneyfacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01692 500 677)

PIBS

Fixed Rate	Gross coupon	Buying price	Gross yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase amount
Birmingham Midshires 9.375%	98.92	94.70	100.17	1,000	
Bradford & Bingley 11.625%	121.59	9.548	100.13	10,000	
Bradford & Bingley 13.000%	135.96	9.541	100.20	10,000	
Bradford & Bingley 13.375%	138.78	9.549	100.34	1,000	
Cheshire 13.000%	134.43	9.685	100.42	1,000	
Coventry 12.125%	128.52	9.562	100.75	1,000	
First National 11.750%	115.74	10.143	100.25	10,000	
Halifax 8.750%	94.13	9.296	100.82	50,000	
Halifax 12.000%	126.44	9.288	100.28	50,000	
Halifax 14.125%	145.13	9.282	100.10	50,000	
Leeds & Holbeck 13.375%	138.97	9.607	100.23	1,000	
Newcastle 10.750%	115.50	9.294	100.32	1,000	
Newcastle 12.625%	135.50	9.300	100.45	1,000	
Northern Rock 12.625%	138.14	9.117	100.14	1,000	
Skipdon 12.875%	137.33	9.356	100.48	1,000	

Floating Rate	Gross coupon	Buying price	Issue price	Minimum purchase
Cheshire (28/03-28/09) 9.2476%	103.83	100.00	1,000	
First Nat (20/03-20/09) 9.30000%	100.63	100.00	1,000	

PIBS = Permanent Interest-bearing shares
Source: ABN AMRO House Gower - 0171 601 0101

<div>SHARE IN FOCUS: LLOYDS CHEMISTS ANOTHER BID EXPECTED?</div>		<div><div></div><div>500p</div><div>450</div><div>400</div><div>350</div><div>300</div><div>250</div><div>200</div><div>150</div></div>	<div>Scarborough 0800 590547</div> <div>0.25</div>									
		<div><div></div><div>500p</div><div>450</div><div>400</div><div>350</div><div>300</div><div>250</div><div>200</div><div>150</div></div>	<div>Banks</div> <div>0.89</div>									
		<div><div></div><div>500p</div><div>450</div><div>400</div><div>350</div><div>300</div><div>250</div><div>200</div><div>150</div></div>	<div>Bank of Ireland 01734 510100</div> <div>2.49</div>									
		<div><div></div><div>500p</div><div>450</div><div>400</div><div>350</div><div>300</div><div>250</div><div>200</div><div>150</div></div>	<div>Nat West Bank 0800 400699</div> <div></div>									
Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb

Gas VAT rebate lost in the system



From Mr Peter Orr

Sir, So farewell to Cedric Brown, who must surely rank high among the many overvalued players in the premier personnel league. Is it mere coincidence, I wonder, that his departure synchronises with the discovery of a failure in the accounting system of British Gas? Some time ago, like many other people, I sought (quite legally, we were assured) to avoid VAT on my fuel bills by depositing in advance quite a large sum of money in my account with British Gas. Now, I am informed that the credit balance has been paid back into my

bank. Two letters from me protesting about British Gas's action produced no reply, but a patient woman on the switchboard of British Gas in Edinburgh told me the mishap had occurred as a result of transferring accounts to a new computer system. Well, it would, wouldn't it? From her weary tone, I guessed that mine was just one of similar complaints. An "own goal" for Cedric Brown, before his substitute takes over?

Yours faithfully,
PETER ORR,
17 Berkley Drive,
Guisborough, Cleveland.

Pension clawback to be challenged

From Mr David Lindsay
Sir, Mrs Shummin (Weekend Money Letters, February 3) and others concerned at the "clawback" from unemployment benefit for occupational pensions over £35 per week now suffered by the over-55s — contrary to the principle of "no means test for contributory benefits" enshrined in the Beveridge scheme — may be interested to hear that, although only Parliament can wholly undo what it ought never to have done, Cespa (Campaign for Equal State

Pension Ages), fresh from its triumph in the prescription charge case, is looking into the feasibility of challenging the method of imposition of the clawback — also by reference to the Equal Treatment Directive.

After all, setting the clawback age at 55 for both men and women means that men can suffer it for up to ten years, against five for women, and also that many more men than women are affected by it.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID LINDSAY
(Legal Adviser for Cespa),
36 Orchard Coombe,
Whitchurch Hill,
Reading.

Why it would pay to die on a Tuesday

From Mr T. Lomas
Sir, Mr Baird (Weekend Money Letters, February 10) need not despair. My 65th birthday this year also falls on a Tuesday but when I questioned the fairness of my entitlement to state pension not beginning until the following Monday, I was told that in the week of my death I would be entitled to a full week's pension, whether I live a full week or not.

To take full advantage of this Mr Baird should arrange that when he eventually has to die he should die on a Tuesday, or at latest on a Monday after he has collected his pension, but the night before he dies he should have a whale of a night out on a full week's pension.

Yours faithfully,
T. LOMAS,
21 Clarence Road,
St Albans, Hertfordshire.

Premium Bond vigil

From Mr R. Jarvis
Sir, I often find it interesting to read that when Premium Bond winners are announced, National Savings also releases details of the number of bonds held by each winner.

What I should like to know is how long the winner has owned the bonds before being successful. Why you may ask? Because I have owned one bond since 1957. My optimism of being an eventual winner has cost me approximately £14 in lost interest! Am I just being reckless by continuing to be patient?

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD JARVIS,
14 Woodview Close,
Colchester.

Information for Weekend Money may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5082. Letters should include a daytime number. The Times asks that original documents are not sent in.

Sids need to be considered

From Mrs C. M. Behrmann
Sir, The Times of February 9 had an article entitled "More risk, less reward" in which it says: "Amazingly, BT still has 2.5 million shareholders content to see it underperform a rising stock market average indefinitely."

I am an 80-year-old Sid and I am not at all content. Sids bought privatisation shares in the belief that the Government was selling them a fair investment so it would have been if BT had not suffered persistent punitive restrictions, hampering it at every turn.

Surely, competition now is global, not just little Britain, and as BT is Britain's telecommunications front-runner (though probably will not be permitted to be so much longer) the telecommunications regulator should be giving it assistance to compete worldwide, not as its "worst enemy", as The Times reported, assisting the likes of AT&T to undermine it.

And in the Office of Telecommunications' competition frenzy isn't it time some thought might be given to the shareholders?

Yours faithfully,
C. M. BEHRMANN,
57 Powys,
Sidmouth,
Devon.

When returns are far from friendly

Societies are facing criticism over their fees,

Caroline

Merrell finds

INVESTOR AGED 45	
Monthly premium	£20.50
Contract term	10 years
Life cover	£1,845
If investments grew at 6% a year you would get back £2,680	
If investments grew at 8% a year you would get back £3,100	
If investments grew at 12% a year you would get back £3,580	

The example HFS sent

£3,125.61 at the end of ten years, with no risk to capital.

Mr Goodman claims the illustration is misleading. He says: "There must be thousands and thousands of small savers who will go to their bed tonight in the mistaken belief

that they will be getting a 6 per cent return on their modest investment."

The friendly society lists the charges on this product in the following way: a 56 per annum policy fee, an annual management charge of up to 0.235 per cent of the fund per annum, and a 5 per cent bid/offer spread on each investment.

Peter Stanford, Homeowners Friendly Society head of marketing, said: "The savings plan invests in the Great British Exempt fund, which in 1995 grew by 23.05 per cent including charges. With a period of low interest rates, this is a fairly healthy return. Performance depends on the growth in the market and the performance of our fund managers, which cannot be accurately forecast. The charges made on the policy may appear high, but they are not unreasonable, and are comparable with other societies'."

A survey in next month's *Planned Savings*, the monthly trade magazine, found that the charges on friendly society products would cut the annual yield on some policies by as much as 5.9 per cent.

This means that even if the policy yielded a 10 per cent return, the charges would cut back this yield to 4 per cent.

Doesn't a high return with immediate tax savings sound better than a TESSA?

If you want to achieve a high tax-free return, you needn't lock your money away in a TESSA for 5 years.

Producing some 7% gross, with no entry charges, Clerical Medical's Capital Builder PEP offers the potential to achieve a more attractive return than you would from a TESSA.

NO INITIAL OR EXIT CHARGE

HIGH TAX-FREE RETURN

But that isn't the only advantage. You can access your savings at any time without losing the tax-free benefits. And when you do want to get to your money, there won't even be an exit charge.

Return the coupon or call the number below and see how we can show your savings a better deal.

Free Linkline: 0500 631 531.

Send to: Clerical Medical Unit Trust Managers Limited, FREEPOST, Narrow Plains, Bristol BS2 0AB.

Name: Mr/Ms/Ms/Ms/Ms

Address

Postcode

TM17

Minimum investment \$3,000. Redemption yield on 31.1.96 was 7.16%. Tax benefits for PEPs can change; the value of these benefits depends on your circumstances. Please remember that unlike a building society where your capital is guaranteed, the value of PEP investments and the income from them may go down as well as up, particularly in the short term and that past performance is no guide to the future. A member of ALUTP. Regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and PERSO. Clerical Medical Unit Trust Managers Limited is part of the Clerical Medical Investment Group which comprises Clerical Medical and General Life Assurance Society and its subsidiary companies.

To reach the highest level in any field of world competition takes years of hard work and consistent performance.

It's a concept Perpetual understands only too well. This consistency has seen us collect thirty-five offshore investment awards over the last five years.

In addition, in the last four years alone, the international investment achievements of our investment advisers have resulted in over 40 industry awards, and they've been named

The Sunday Times International Unit Trust Manager of the Year four times in the last seven years.

Yet, perhaps surprisingly, we don't have a prescribed investment policy. Instead, we give our teams of highly experienced investment advisers the flexibility to make their own investment decisions within their particular areas of expertise. Then we monitor their performance

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Wherever you're looking to invest, Perpetual is committed to helping you make the most of your investments.

very closely. All we insist on is consistent success. Backed by world-wide research and sophisticated investment databases, our global investment performance is hard to beat. Eight of our ten offshore funds are in the top 25% of their sectors for their performance since launch, four are sector leaders and seven have been awarded a top AAA rating by qualitative fund management analysts.

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For more information on our range of offshore funds, telephone our Customer Services Department on +44 (0) 1534 607660 or send a fax on +44 (0) 1534 38918. Alternatively, fill in the coupon below.

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Important: Please print clearly.

Print Name (Mr/Ms/Ms)

Address

Postcode

TM 17/02/96

6 out of 6 funds are in the top 25% of their sectors for their performance over 5 years. Positions are to 1st February 1996 and are on an offer-to-offer US Dollar basis, inclusive of reinvested income, net of withholding taxes (source: Micropal). Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. The value of an investment and the income from it can go down as well as up (this may partly be a result of exchange rate fluctuations) and you may not get back the amount invested.

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No matter how carefully you plan, life has a habit of presenting us all with unexpected twists and turns. Early retirement; a change of career; children. All these can change your circumstances, so you need a pension plan which is flexible enough to let you cope with any changes without penalty!

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- Lets you retire earlier than planned - without penalty.
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To: The Equitable Life, FREEPOST, WILTON STREET, AYLESBURY, Bedfordshire HP21 7BA
I would welcome details on The Equitable's pension plans. I am self-employed ☐ I am an employee ☐ I am an employee in a company pension scheme ☐

NAME (Mr/Ms/Ms)

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Date of Birth



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AIRBUS & TEST

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ELECTRONIC & ELECT

FLUENT MATERIALS

MATERIALS

OPTICALS

POLYMER

PROPERTIES

RESEARCH

SUPPLY CHAIN

THERMAL ANALYSIS

VIBRATION

X-RAY

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1984	1983	Low Company	Price	% Chg.	% Pt.	1984	Low Company	Price	% Chg.	% Pt.
744	427	Celanese	731	29.35	27	411	Fundy Towers	150	5.16	12
745	427	Cellulose	2221	22.19	10	222	First Fed	150	1.12	12
746	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
747	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
748	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
749	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
750	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
751	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
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776	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
777	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
778	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
779	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
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792	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
793	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
794	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
795	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
796	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
797	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
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799	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
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813	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
814	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
815	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
816	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
817	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
818	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
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820	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
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822	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
823	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
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825	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
826	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
827	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
828	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
829	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
830	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
831	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
832	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
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836	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
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838	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
839	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
840	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
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844	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
845	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
846	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
847	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
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852	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
853	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
854	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
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863	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
864	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
865	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
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868	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
869	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
870	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
871	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
872	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
873	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
874	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
875	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
876	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
877	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
878	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
879	412	Chem	2385	1.15	21	158	First Fed	200	1.12	12
880	412	Chem	2385</							

France under pressure in Paris

Ireland look for new direction from Humphreys

FROM JOHN HOPKINS IN PARIS

THE difference that one match in the five nations' rugby union championship makes was emphasised beneath the grey, sunless skies here yesterday. France, after concluding their preparations for the game against Ireland today, are on the back foot once again. The criticisms are coming at them thick and fast, as they do in France, where intrigue, rumours, gossip and speculation are all part of everyday life.

There have been attacks by players, spectators and officials on Jean-Claude Skrela, the France coach. A headline in one paper yesterday suggested that Skrela's honeymoon period is over — "L'état de Grâce Terminé". Players have turned on one another, too. The forwards did not compete (in Scotland) and win the ball; the backs did not run and tackle. Thomas Castaignède said, "We were embarrassing."

Nobody has been able to explain away France's apparent lapse at Murrayfield two weeks ago, and, though it was only their second defeat in the nine games since Skrela took over from Pierre Berbizier after the World Cup, it has cast France into a mood of gloom and introspection. Skrela went closest to defining what went wrong for his team in Scotland earlier this month. "Someone with more hunger than skill is stronger than someone with more skill than hunger," he said.

The trouble with this, eloquent explanation is that it demeans the Scots, who, on the day, outplayed France.

That victory meant that Scotland, not France, were on the trail of the grand slam. France, favourites before the competition began, and even stronger favourites after they had beaten England, were left rather like victims of a daylight mugging, sitting on the pavement rubbing their heads and trying to remember what had happened and what had gone wrong.

After that performance, changes were made in the France team and three men who had never before played in the five nations' championship were selected to play

FIVE NATIONS



CHAMPIONSHIP

against Ireland — Richard Castel, the flanker, Olivier Campan, in the centre, and Franck Tournaire, a prop. Only seven of the France team played in the championship last season, and only nine remain from the side that beat Ireland in the World Cup quarter-finals in Dublin last June. Castel, a beefy flanker, is described as "an bulldozer". "I have an Irish temperment. I must use it," Castel said. "The backs have been reshuffled. Gone is Philippe

Carbonneau and in comes Guy Accoceberry, the fifth scrum half used by France in as many years. Castaignède moves to stand-off half. Thierry Lacroix to the centre. As both the half backs are chemists, France will expect some alchemy from them.

Ireland are attempting to end one of the worst of all sporting records. They have won only once in Paris since 1952, and that was in 1972. They have not scored a try in Paris since 1980 and not beaten France in Ireland since 1983. France have scored 26 tries against Ireland since 1980, including what has become known as the "try of the thousand passes", in 1986. This move involved 13 Frenchmen handling the ball, three of them touching it four times each, before Sella scored.

Under Skrela's coaching, France have averaged three tries each match and clearly intend to carry on moving the ball as much as possible. As Ireland appear prepared to do the same, the chances of a fast, open match are good. At stand-off half, Ireland have selected David Humphreys, of Oxford University, who has been described as a "little gem" by Clive Woodward, the coach of London Irish. "He's got it, big time," Woodward said.

Humphreys, who makes his Ireland debut, scored all of Oxford University's 19 points in the thrilling University match before Christmas. He seems cool and calm on the eye of what will surely be an intimidating test. Jérôme Riondet, played alongside Humphreys at Oxford and has reported to his countrymen that "Humphreys can do everything, plus he is clairvoyant".

Jérôme Davidson and Peter Clohessy both reported fit after Ireland's light training session yesterday morning. Davidson's eye and Clohessy's back survived 25 minutes of touch rugby and 20 lineouts without damage.

Logic and form are turned upside down in matches involving these countries more often than any others. So it is safe to ignore all known form and predict that Ireland will win. Such a win would prompt considerable celebrations by the Irish in the traffic-filled streets of this city tonight and tomorrow morning. It would have been a long time, after all.

Peace emblems, page 2



In an increasingly professional age, Castaignède espouses amateur values. Photograph: Julian Herbert

An innocent with a touch of steel

Andrew Longmore on the free spirit determined to restore France's adventurous approach

Dressed in his dark blue French Rugby Federation blazer, black hair unbrushed, face fresh, brown eyes bright, Thomas Castaignède looks more like a boy on his way to school than the man charged with restoring some pride to French rugby, but, for once, the selectors might have made the right choice.

As the team gathered for the five nations' championship match against Ireland at the Parc des Princes today, recriminations after an abject defeat by Scotland still ringing in their ears, the 21-year-old stand-off half, all new France and II stone of him, was espousing a philosophy starkly and wonderfully out of its time. Castaignède spoke in good English of concepts such as "giving pleasure" and "having fun" and admitted that, when he had been asked by Jean-Claude Skrela, the coach, to replace Thierry Lacroix as stand-off against Ireland, his acceptance had come with a condition.

"I told him, if you want me, you can have me, but I will take some hazards," he said. He meant risks, but hazards conveyed the point rather better. The greatest France teams have always been haphazard by nature.



It says something about the strength of Castaignède's beliefs as well as his character that his message should be so firm. For all his winning dropped goal against England, he gained no pleasure from the sterility of his side that day. "In Scotland," he added, "we were just very bad." Against Ireland, he aims to bring back the basics: passing the ball and running like the wind.

"We have to make more of a spectacle because the public deserve something better," he said. "We should show our real face." Such claims trip easily off the tongue, of course, but there is a pedigree and an innocence to Castaignède, a touch of steel, too, that suggests that these are more than idle boasts.

A student of chemical engineering, Castaignède was brought up by Pierre, his father, a gifted stand-off himself, to see rugby as a game, not a profession. He was fed the legend of André Boniface, one of the greatest of France backs, and was nicknamed

"Le Petit Boni" at his home town club at Mont-de-Marsan. When he graduated to the red-and-black of Toulouse, his ideals found a ready home.

"I take my rugby like a joke, just for fun," Castaignède said. "To me, it's like playing with friends. Even if I know it's very important, I am still trying to get pleasure from playing, for me and the crowd. I would prefer to lose but to score some tries." Who does the man think he is, an amateur or something?

Castaignède laughed. "I know it is against the age," he said, "and maybe I will have to change, but that is just the way I am." For the selectors as much as Castaignède, the move to stand-off is a gamble, not least because most of his recent club rugby has been played at centre alongside Christophe Deylaud, the regular Toulouse stand-off.

"I actually made my debut for France last year in Argentina as stand-off, but that was easy," he said. "This will be different — a very difficult

match. I just hope it will work well because it is a long time since I played there, but people have told me not to worry, just play my normal way."

Castaignède's normal game is based on blistering pace more than raw power. He gave up rugby for athletics for two years at school. Whether his mind moves as fast as his feet will be known better by test-time today, and while these are still early days — this will be only his seventh cap — the style of the France team through to the next World Cup could well be determined by Castaignède's ability to harness the genius of the backs.

Castaignède has his eyes firmly set on the same goal and might even sacrifice his amateur instincts to pursue it, once his studies have finished. "I think I will go to rugby full-time because I would like to be more prepared to play," he said, "but, you know, I can't always think about rugby all the time — one week, two weeks, then it drives me crazy." It is not only France who should pray that Castaignède's precocious skills flourish this afternoon. Rugby needs every last scrap of his wide-eyed sense of adventure.

Wasps can provide stern test as Bath begin to splutter

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

IN RECENT weeks, Bath have faltered. They lost their most recent league match and struggled through the cup against second-division opponents. That all this occurred during a six-week period is, perhaps, why it happened, there having been little continuity in the season since the turn of the year.

Whether they can pick up the threads today in the Courage Clubs Championship remains to be seen, but, if their one-match advantage at the top of the first division is to be pulled back, Wasps are one of the clubs who might do it. Wasps are also one of the few senior clubs who can strengthen in the view of recent visitors to England that the quality of rugby is not so bad as is sometimes portrayed.

New South Wales ended their eight-match tour with a one-point win at Coventry on Thursday and now look forward to their opening Super 12 match, against Transvaal on March 1, but Matt Williams, their manager, has been surprised to find so many good players operating at such a variety of levels in England.

"How England don't dominate world rugby is beyond me," Williams said. "There is a perception that northern-hemisphere rugby is boring rugby, but we haven't found that. You have such strength in depth, although in Australia we spot players early and push them."

Australian sides, too, long ago came to terms with league rugby whereas English clubs, particularly this season, allow the perceived restrictions of the league programme to govern playing style. It has taken character for Bath and Wasps to break that mould and adopt a broader style.

A key component of Bath's success this season has been Jonathan Callard's play from full back. Bath, however, have chosen to drop him today and play Mike Carr in his England position — largely, it would appear, because Callard's place-kicking in the cup win over Wakefield was not as it should have been.

That is a harsh verdict indeed, though it will be instructive to see which player appears in the quarter-final against Bristol next week. Wasps play Lawrence Dallaglio on the open side.

FRANCE

J-L Sédoumy (Colomiers)
E Narmack (Toulouse)
T Lacroix (Dax)
O Campan (Agen)
P St André (Montfermeil)
T Castaignède (Toulouse)
G Accoceberry (Bègles-Bordeaux)
J Cellario (Toulouse)
M Gonzalez (Bayonne)
F Tournaire (Narbonne)
G Roumat (Toulouse)
A Benazzi (Agen)
O Roumat (Dax)
L Cabannes (Racing)
F Pelous (Dax)
Referee: E F Morrison (England)
REPLACEMENTS: 16 P Bernat-Salles (Bègles-Bordeaux), 17 S Glas (Bordeaux), 18 P Carbonneau (Toulouse), 19 S Dispagne (Toulouse), 20 M de Rougemont (Toulon), 21 M Parle (Toulon)

IRELAND

J E Staples (Hertoghe)
R M Wallace (Garryowen)
J C Bell (Northampton)
K P McGuirk (Bedford Rangers)
N K P J Woods (Blackrock Coll)
D G Humphreys (London Irish)
N A Hogan (Ternure College)
N J Poplewell (Newcastle)
T J Kingston (Dolphin)
P M Clohessy (Young Munster)
J W Davidson (Dungannon)
G M Fitcher (Cork Constitution)
P S Johns (Dungannon)
D S Corlery (Cork Constitution)
V C P Costello (St Mary's College)
Kick-off: 2.00 * denotes captain
REPLACEMENTS: 16 M J Field (Malone), 17 P A Burke (Cork Constitution), 18 O Savernutto (Sail), 19 W D McBride (Malone), 20 H D Hurley (Old Wesley), 21 A T H Clarke (Northampton)

Thomas still ready to make the running

By GERALD DAVIES

WHO can control his fate? The question arises as much in sport as in other, less trivial matters, and it is a conundrum with which the first-year philosophy student might care to wrestle. There may be many guiding principles which govern a sportsman's brief span, but, in the bone, he must above all else be a born stoic. Otherwise, he will soon perish. Justin Thomas, the Walker full back, understands this more than most after his blunder of an experience at Twickenham a fortnight ago.

He had the kind of match that players of any sport, having had misfortune visit them, recognise and understand. It is the day when nothing is likely to go right.

Errors occur not in any moderate sense, but unsparingly.

Against England, it began early for Thomas. Under no pressure, he mislaid the ball in the opening minutes and gave England an early advantage. Soon after, a wayward kick from Will Carling rolled evenly towards Twickenham's southwestern corner. Thomas, though unscapable at times, this is never a good position to take what is an unfriendly, oval ball turning on its points. In that dreadful, expectant pause, the ball lifted sharply and, Thomas, unopposed, knuckled on.

"I knew then it was going to be one of those games," Thomas, who was playing for Wales for the fourth time, said. "Nothing is going to go my way today. I thought — and

here of all places, today of all days. This is not a backwater game against the village club. This is Wales against England... a 75,000 crowd at Twickenham... 60 million on television. I felt in a nightmare. Worse was to come. In the seventh minute of the second half, Thomas, 22, who has scored 20 tries for club and various Wales representative teams in the past two seasons, picked up Paul Grayson's attempted dropped goal. Thomas began exercising his usual first option and looked for the opportunity to run. He dilled near his own goal line and dallied still further. By the time that he had made up his mind to kick, Jeremy Goscutt had closed the gap, charged down the kick and scored. "It really surprised me how quickly Goscutt got to me,"

Thomas, of Llanelli, said. "At international level, defences close you down so much quicker. There is a massive shift in stronger. Players are stronger, faster and sharper 'upstairs'. There is less time."

"What happened has happened. I've got to put it behind me. After all, it's just not to me that such things occur. I felt the way David Campese must have felt when he thought of running near his own goal line after gathering Rob Andrew's attempted dropped goal against the British Isles in 1989. That, too, failed and Iuan Evans scored the winning try."

A man of discretion would have kicked immediately to touch, but Thomas, like Campese, enjoys the chancy run. He loves improvising and

breaking free from the sober tyranny of the coach. So what of him since Twickenham?

"I've thought a lot about what I did two weeks ago," he said, "and I've gone out to do what I normally do in training. I've practised and practised and practised, practising the mistakes out of my game." He is keeping in mind, he said, what Gary Player once said. Upon seeing the meticulous South African golfer, early one morning, putting every ball into the hole on the practice green before the day's play, an impatient onlooker observed how lucky Player had been to do so. To which Player replied: "The more I practise, the luckier I get."

Thomas must be hoping that such a philosophy will work for him today against Scotland.

SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cm)		Conditions	Runs to resort	Weather (Spm)	Last snow
	L	U	Piste	Off/p		
AUSTRIA						
Mayrhofen	10	60	fair	varied	cloud	-3 16/2
			(All pistes improving; snow forecast)			
Obergurgl	50	110	good	varied	good	cloud -5 15/2
			(Excellent skiing on and off-pistes)			
Saalfeld	30	55	good	varied	art snow	-3 16/2
			(Fresh snow giving good skiing on most pistes)			
FRANCE						
Alpe d'Huez	115	300	good	powder	good sun	-5 13/2
			(Excellent skiing conditions; Seranne pistes open)			
Les Arcs	105	220	good	varied	good sun	-8 13/2
			(Excellent skiing on all pistes; off-piste skied out)			
Avoriaz	170	210	good	varied	good snow	-1 16/2
			(Superb skiing everywhere; gully winds at altitude)			
Megève	70	170	good	varied	good sun	-1 13/2
			(All pistes in excellent shape; wonderful conditions)			
La Tania	70	135	good	powder	good sun	-10 14/2
			(Excellent powdery snow on most pistes; bright sunshine)			
Tignes	125	200	good	varied	good sun	-12 13/2
			(Deep snow cover and excellent skiing everywhere)			
Val d'Isère	110	230	good	powder	good sun	0 14/2
			(Superb skiing everywhere; good powder at Le Fornel)			
SWITZERLAND						
Mürren	55	160	good	heavy	good snow	-1 16/2
			(Excellent conditions; all lifts, links and runs open)			
Verbier	80	140	good	powder	good fair	0 13/2
			(Almost all runs now open; excellent everywhere)			
Villars	70	120	good	powder	good fine	0 14/2
			(Excellent skiing on all pistes; Les Diablerets link open)			

Source: Ski Club of Great Britain. L - lower slopes; U - upper; art - artificial.

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10/11 France 12/1 Draw Ireland 10/11
Today, Parc des Princes, Kick-off 2.00pm.

WINNING MARGIN		WINNING MARGIN	
WALES	SCOTLAND	FRANCE	IRELAND
7/2	1-5 pts	15/2	1-5 pts
5/1	6-10 pts	4/1	6-10 pts
11/1	11-15 pts	4/1	11-15 pts
22/1	16-20 pts	9/2	16-20 pts
40/1	21-25 pts	11/2	21-25 pts

14/1 Drawn match

FIRST TRYSCORER		FIRST TRYSCORER	
9/1 L. Evans	12/1 Proctor	6/1 St. Andre	12/1 Lacroix
9/1 Joiner	12/1 Shepherd	13/2 Ntamack	16/1 Accoceberry
10/1 Dods	14/1 L. Davies	9/1 Sadoorny	16/1 Cabannes
11/1 Jardine	14/1 N. Davies	10/1 Campan	16/1 Castaignède
12/1 Hastings	14/1 J. Thomas	12/1 Wallace	18/1 Bell

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Les Deux Alpes, France	Chalet Solal d'Alpe	31 Mar	23 Mar	£245	£215	£30
Les Deux Alpes, France	Chalet Pierre Roger	41 Mar	16 Mar	£263	£210	£53
Les Deux Alpes, France	Chalet Neige de Printemps	31 Mar	06 Mar	£264	£200	£64
Verbier, Switzerland	Chalet Horvath	31 Mar	16 Mar	£262	£230	£32
La Plagne, France	Chalet Les Montagnards	41 Mar	23 Mar	£274	£240	£34
Val d'Isère, France	Chalet Jardin Alpin	41 Mar	23 Mar	£263	£240	£23
Courmayeur, France	Chalet du Fermier	31 Mar	16 Mar	£263	£240	£23

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Saturday portrait: Stan Collymore, by Oliver Holt

Free spirit discovers perfect platform for self-expression

Fame and wealth throw a gentle embrace around some footballers. Gary Lineker fell in with them effortlessly, danced with them and never forgot to give them a polite goodnight kiss. Because he was so sweet, they loved him back and it turned into a beautiful friendship. Somehow, though, the magic is missing from their relationship with Stan Collymore.

The man who cost more than Dennis Bergkamp, more than Faustino Asprilla, more than Andy Cole and Les Ferdinand, too, has had a stormy affair with the trappings of his success since Liverpool signed him from Nottingham Forest before the start of this season for £8.5 million. At times, the promised land has appeared like a mirage in the desert to him.

Then Collymore is nothing like Lineker. His is a restless soul, brimming with insecurities, needing to be reassured. His personality is a feast of contradictions — a man who is labelled greedy for trying to eke an extra £425,000 out of Forest after his departure, but who readily admits that all the money that he has earned has not made him any happier than when he was 15.

Some still say that he is arrogant and difficult. Barry Fry, his manager at Southend United, tells a different story. "You never hear about him coming back to play in a match for Southend's groundsman who had been there 40 years and signing autographs for 90 minutes afterwards," Fry said. "He never gave me a moment of trouble. I don't know any player who deserves success more than him. He was a hero for me in every sense."

Collymore has probably been ill-served by the fact that he is one of those rarities in the national game — a deep thinker, an intelligent player. He is not afraid to talk about his socialist views, about the need to look after a wider community beyond each person's immediate family. "My generation has been brought up to say 'I'm all right, Jack,'" he said, "and that's wrong." He is not someone who just goes with the flow.

He is not a simple goliath striker like Lineker, either. He

'All I ever wanted to know from Liverpool was that they wanted me to play a part'

ball as I used to at Forest," he said, "so I thought I had better go looking for it. Now, I make space for myself deeper and wider while Robbie pushes on. Before, we were getting in each other's way a bit. We were both trying to be out-and-out goalscorers."

Before it all started going right, Collymore took the brunt of the criticism from Liverpool fans used to hurling only superlatives at their centre forwards. Now, though, it is his name that they call out first before home games.

He won one England cap, against Japan at Wembley in June last year, and his recent form earned him a call-up to one of Terry Venables's training sessions. He has been so impressive that he is neck-and-neck with Teddy Sheringham, Ferdinand and Fowler for the place alongside Shearer in the England team that will contest the European championship finals this summer.

The key to understanding Great Britain's costliest footballer,

though, lies, as it does with most of us, in his roots. He was brought up by Doreen, his mother, on whom he dotes, after his father left them when he was young. She worked 14 hours a day as a cleaner at the local swimming baths to provide for him. When he was at Forest and now, at Liverpool, he refused to move away from his home town of Cannock, a mining community in Staffordshire, where his friends and family are.

"Perhaps it rubbed a few people up the wrong way at Forest when I decided to stay in Cannock, but I had a very strong base there and I did not want to lose it," he said. "The whole 'loner' thing started then. I suppose if not going out to clubs is being a loner, then I am one, but if people think I sit at home reading a book all the time, they are wide of the mark."

Away from the security of home, Collymore is anything but the epitome of self-confidence that he can sometimes appear to be. He speaks with a soft Midlands accent, politely and earnestly, keen to get his point across. There is nothing arrogant about him, no hint of trying to shy away from the rest of the team.

"I have never been more settled than I am now," he said. "There is no one here that I don't get on with and I'm good mates with Jamie Redknapp, David James and Phil Babb. I'm very happy."

It has not always been like that in his short career. He has had a problem settling at a string of clubs from Walsall and Wolverhampton Wanderers, through to Stafford Rangers and Crystal Palace. Only at Southend, where Fry made him feel like he was the best thing that had ever happened to the club, did he really feel wanted.

At Palace, he was kept out of the first team by Ian Wright and Mark Bright and the dressing-room wages went to work. "There were some very quick London boys in the dressing-room," Alan Smith, the Wycombe Wanderers manager, who was the reserve team boss at Palace when Collymore was there, said. "There was a lot of micky-taking and I don't think Stan could handle it. He was a gentle giant, not an aggressive personality at all."

They took the micky out of



him and his Midlands accent. If he tried to be one of the boys, it only made it worse. I think on one trip he said he was a ladies' man. It was the sort of thing any young fella might say if he was trying to impress, but that was it — he got slaughtered."

At Forest, he was supposed to have had a training-ground bust-up with a team-mate and once, when he scored a goal, the other Forest players scorned the usual hugs and congratulations and let him celebrate by himself. The

"awkward" tag began to get him down. "It was always 'You've got great talent, but...' and that 'but' hangs on you like a ton weight after a while," he said.

When things hit the skids at Liverpool last year, it seemed that it was all going the same way again. He gave an interview to *FourFourTwo* magazine that was widely publicised, even though he claims that he spoke off the record. In it, he told the reporter that he was dismayed at the way he was being treated by his new team.

"My ideas on big clubs have changed," he said. "You think you are going to something far superior in every way. So many clubs — I've got to be careful here — are a sham. You go there thinking they will be centres of excellence and they are far from it. I do not know of any other industry that would lay out £8.5 million and then not have some plan of how they are going to use it."

Even Evans was forced to admit that the last part, in particular, was a point well made and the rift

was smoothed over. Yesterday, as Collymore prepared for the FA Cup clash with Shrewsbury Town tomorrow, he was the picture of contentment. "All I ever wanted to know from Liverpool was that they wanted me to play a part," he said. "I would much rather be on half of what I could earn and know that I am in a team where I am wanted." Well, Liverpool have made their intentions clear now, and Stan the Man, Britain's most expensive footballer, is starting to earn his £12,000 a week.

THE TIMES MATCH-BY-MATCH GUIDE TO THE FA CUP THIS WEEKEND

5TH ROUND

HUDDERSFIELD v WIMBLEDON

Few will forget the headed goal from Lawrie Sanchez that gave Wimbledon a shock 1-0 victory over Liverpool in the 1995 final. Though the Crazy Gang has just about disbanded, Wimbledon can still give Wembley a run, with victory at splendid Meadow Lane leaving them only two games away. Huddersfield, third in the Endcliffe league first division, make their first fifth-round appearance since 1972, but have progressed eight times from 12 attempts at this stage. Best bet is a replay at Meadow Lane.

LAST MEETING: No fixture.

RECORD: No previous meetings in competition.

HUDDERSFIELD TOWN (from): S. Francis, S. Jenkins, T. Cowan, K. Gray, I. Stewart, P. Reed, D. O'Donnell, L. Mallet, P. Dalton, R. Booth, R. Mann, R. Rowe, S. Collins, J. Dwyer.

WIMBLEDON (from): N. Sullivan, K. Cunningham, A. Kimble, O. Leach, J. Harrison, R. Earle, E. Ekoku, D. Holdsworth, M. Gayle, A. Reeves, M. Harford, C. Perry, J. Euse, A. Clarke, A. Pearce, S. Castledine.

IPSWICH v ASTON VILLA

Ipswich's Cup run has embraced a marvellous replay with away to Blackburn Rovers and a medicine victory, also 1-0, at home against Watford. Thus, they could prove good, bad or indifferent this afternoon. West's victory will be a surprise.

LAST MEETING: Ipswich Town 1 Aston Villa 0 (2nd rd, 1990-91).

RECORD: 1-1, 1-2 (1988-89); 3-1 (1974-75); 1-0 (1980-81).

IPSWICH (from): R. Wright, M. Stockwell, G. Uhlirbeck, M. Tansco, A. Vaughan, A. Mowbray, C. Thompson, S. Sedgley, J. Ward, G. Williams, M. Mason, J. Marshall, J. Sowerby, S. Slater, M. Gregory, A. Turner.

ASTON VILLA (from): M. Bosnich, G. Charles, A. Wright, S. Stanton, P. McGrath, U. Ekwogu, G. Southgate, M. Diaper, A. Townsend, I. Taylor, T. Johnson, S. Mifsoskie, D. Yorke, G. Farnley, M. Oakes, F. Carr.

SWINDON v SOUTHAMPTON

Play that Steve McMahon, the Swindon player-manager, is likely to be missing, with a hamstring strain. The sight of him charging into tackles and missing both body and ball, like he did on several occasions against Oxford on Monday, would have been an entertaining prospect. Once he had calmed down, though, he played an influential role. Swindon will indeed miss him. Paul Allen plays against the club that gave him his first transfer in November and, apparently, still bears a grudge or two. Watch him go.

LAST MEETING: Swindon Town 0 Southampton 3 (6th rd, 1947-48).

RECORD: 0-3 (1947-48).

SWINDON TOWN (from): F. Digby, I. Culverhouse, P. Bodin, S. Taylor, M. Robinson, P. Allen, K. Hollock, T. Goodson, M. Ling, P. Thorne, W. Allison, W. O'Sullivan, S. Finney, F. Tella, A. Smith.

SOUTHAMPTON (from): D. Bessant, J. Dodd, F. Benali, R. Hall, K. Monk, J. Magilton, M. Le Tissier, G. Venison, N. Shipperley, G. Watson, M. Walters, N. Maddison, M. Oakes, B. Gribble.

SHREWSBURY v LIVERPOOL

If Shrewsbury beat Liverpool, Hall will freeze over and for ever more be used as an ice cube. Eighth in the Endcliffe league, Shrewsbury represents a good mix of players. The spectacle of John Gosselin, slipping the light fantastic at Gay Meadow makes the mind boggle. Shrewsbury really do not have a Sunday morning prayer. The first half-off could perhaps make a difference, but only in so far as there will be no Saturday Night Fever for either set of legs.

LAST MEETING: No fixture.

RECORD: No previous meetings in competition.

SHREWSBURY TOWN (from): P. Edwards, T. Clarke, K. Seabury, C. White, T. Lynch, D. Watson, P. Watson, M. Taylor, P. Evans, I. Reed, A. Bentley, R. Woods, M. Duggan, I. Stevens, S. Antwi.

LIVERPOOL (from): D. James, J. McMahon, R. Jones, J. Scott, M. Wright, P. Babb, J. Barnes, S. McLennan, M. Thomas, R. Fowler, S. Collymore, A. Warner, N. Kennedy, I. Rust, S. Harbridge.

TOMORROW: 5TH ROUND

MANCHESTER UNITED v MANCHESTER CITY

Manchester will be all a tremble tomorrow, when the latest episode of United-City warfare breaks out. Post Cup meetings have been shared, with two wins apiece, but United have lost only one game in 15 against the old foe since Alex Ferguson became manager in November 1986. At least Garry Fitzroft will not be displaying his combative skills in the light blue, a two-match suspension ten bookings last season having banished him to the sidelines. Probably the safest place to be.

LAST MEETING: Manchester United 1 Man City 0 (2nd rd, 1995-97).

RECORD: 0-3 (1925-26); 0-2 (1954-55); 3-0 (1969-70); 1-0 (1986-87).

MAN UNITED (from): P. Schmeichel, D. Irwin, S. Bruce, D. May, G. Pallister, P. Neville, R. Keane, N. Butt, L. Sharpe, E. Cardona, A. Cole, D. Beckham, P. Scholes, M. McGair, P. Parker, A. Cotter.

MAN CITY (from): E. Innes, N. Summerbee, I. Brightwell, K. Curle, K. Symons, M. Frontzek, M. Brown, G. Kirkdale, S. Limes, N. Clough, U. Rieker, N. Quinn, G. Greeney, C. Beech, A. Rowlands, M. Margeson.

MONDAY: 5TH ROUND

NOTTINGHAM FOREST v TOTTENHAM

What is this? I hold before my eyes? Should be a cracker, even though the Forest has been barely kicking of late. Mind you, Tottenham's form has been a bit dodgy, too, with three defeats in their last six Premiership outings. The last time the sides met in the competition was in the 1991 final, when poor old Brian Clough saw his one remaining dream, to win the FA Cup, fade into oblivion. It all went awry when a bloke called Walker, or something like that, scored an own goal in extra time.

LAST MEETING: Tottenham 2 Nottingham Forest 1 (final, 1990-91).

RECORD: 1-2 (1970-71); 1-1, 1-0 (1974-75); 1-2 (1990-91).

NOTTINGHAM FOREST (from): M. Crossley, A. Fettes, D. Lytle, D. Phillips, C. Cooper, S. Christie, C. Beckwith, S. Gormley, I. Wilson, A. Sliemers, B. Roy, K. Campbell, S. Stone, P. McGee, J. Lee, K. Black, C. Ross.

TOTTENHAM (from): Walker, D. Austin, J. Edinburg, C. Calderwood, G. Macburt, C. Wilson, S. Campbell, D. Oakes, R. Fox, A. Sinton, E. Sheringham, G. Armstrong, S. Netherwood, J. Dossell, R. Rosenthal, C. Day.

AND THE PREMIERSHIP

CHELSEA v WEST HAM

Wot no Ruddy? Gull damaged an ankle in training — weebed the culprit — and is used in no more than 50-50. Chelsea have proved before they can do without the masterful Dutchman and even he was powerless to prevent the 1-0 defeat at Coventry last week. West Ham welcome back the delicious Dani and not-so-beautiful Eric, who were fortunate to miss the 3-0 FA Cup collapse in the glorious air of Clapham on Wednesday. How could it have happened? Definitely something fishy about it.

LAST SEASON: Chelsea 1 West Ham United 2.

TEN-YEAR RECORD: 0-4, 1-0, 1-1, —, 2-1, —, 2-0, 1-2.

CHELSEA (from): K. Hitchcock, T. Phelan, D. Patterson, S. Clarke, D. Lee, M. Duberry, P. Sinclair, E. Johnson, J. Morris, E. Newton, R. Gull, D. Wise, J. Spencer, G. Peacock, P. Furlong, N. Spackman, M. Fox.

WEST HAM (from): I. Milsome, S. Potts, J. Dickie, K. Beards, A. Martin, M. Pope, K. Brown, A. Whittaker, J. Harries, D. Gordon, J. Bishop, M. Hughes, D. Williamson, I. Davis, A. Cobbs, Dani, P. Shilton, L. Sealey.

MIDDLESBROUGH v BOLTON

Compared with everything else of a football nature this weekend, the match between the two teams has about as much appeal as joining the Boerian branch of the Ramblers' Association. Wanderers have as good as gone and Middlesbrough, now Juninho-less as well, are facing last. Still, at least Bryan Robson goes for a slice of Boerian history tomorrow. Lose this one and his eight successive league debuts — equalling the club record — Super Sub will be somebody being treated as the next England supreme.

LAST SEASON: Middlesbrough 1 Bolton Wanderers 0.

TEN-YEAR RECORD: —, 0-0, —, —, 0-1, 1-0.

MIDDLESBROUGH (from): G. Walsh, M. Cox, N. Pearson, S. Vickers, P. Whelan, C. Morris, D. Whyte, J. Pollock, G. Kavanagh, K. O'Halloran, C. Rignall, J. A. Florant, J. Hendrie, A. Moore, N. Barnhill, P. Williams.

BOLTON (from): Y. Brannigan, S. Green, J. Phillips, K. Gurdie, G. Tiggart, C. Fairclough, D. Lee, A. Siddons, N. Blake, F. de Freitas, A. Thompson, J. McGarry, M. Pugh, S. Sellers, A. Davison, S. McAnaspie.

HOW THEY STAND

	P	Pts	Goal diff	Recent form
1 Newcastle	25	60	+29	WWWWW
2 Manchester Utd	25	51	+18	LDWWW
3 Liverpool	26	49	+28	DWWDW
4 Aston Villa	25	45	+18	DWLWW
5 Tottenham	26	42	+8	WWLDL
6 Blackburn	26	41	+12	DWWWW
7 Arsenal	26	41	+9	LDWWL
8 Everton	26	40	+11	WDWWL
9 Nottm Forest	26	40	0	WLWL
10 Chelsea	26	39	+4	WWWWL
11 Leeds	26	35	-6	WWLL
12 Middlesbrough	26	33	-6	LLLL
13 West Ham	25	32	-8	LWWWW
14 Sheffield Wed	26	29	-4	WWLLW
15 Southampton	25	25	-11	LDWWL
16 Wimbledon	26	24	-16	LLWL
17 Coventry	26	24	-18	LDWWL
18 Manchester City	26	24	-20	LDWWL
19 QPR	26	18	-21	LLLL
20 Bolton	26	13	-27	LLWL

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY v QPR

Bit like the boy Nero, Ray Wilkins helps his cool as all around him struggles. He must watch his words, though, after a recent inclusion in Coleman's "Unfortunately, we keep kicking ourselves in the foot." He has quietly led Rangers to seven successive Premiership titles. It is time he tried another method and got seriously angry.

LAST SEASON: Sheffield Wednesday 0 Queens Park Rangers 2.

TEN-YEAR RECORD: 0-0, 1-1, 2-1, 0-0, 2-0, —, 4-1, 0-1, 0-2.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (from): K. Freeman, I. Nolan, D. Shelton, P. Ashman, D. Walker, S. Nield, C. Waddle, M. Duggan, G. Hyde, G. Whelan, D. Horrocks, M. Bright, S. Wells, M. Potts, C. Wood, D. Hunt.

QPR (from): J. Sommer, A. Roberts, D. Bardsley, R. Brown, D. Maddie, C. Vane, M. Bradley, T. Christie, G. Plattner, I. Halloway, R. Wilkins, S. Barber, S. Allen, M. Oakes, T. Shickle, K. Gellan, M. Hensley, G. Ingram.

WHEN TO WATCH ON TELEVISION

Today
10.45pm BBC 1 Match of the Day (Highlights)
Tomorrow
12 noon Sky Sports FA Cup 5th round, round 1
3.55pm BBC 1 Match of the Day
Manchester United v Blackburn Rovers (Highlights)
Shrewsbury v Liverpool (Highlights)
Monday
7.45pm Sky Sports FA Cup 5th round, round 2
Nottingham Forest v Tottenham (Highlights)

Paisley's greatest asset was gift of the common touch



"How is Haterley?" Shankly asked eventually. "He's fine — I was just making sure now we've got him off, you'll not get him back on again!" Paisley retorted. The boardroom rocked with laughter at the man's canny ways.

Horton stages his comeback



It would be sweet irony if Huddersfield, thriving on their manager's commitment to creative, attacking football, progress to the quarter-finals while Manchester City flounders in their rather tricky task at Old Trafford tomorrow. There is still the prospect, too, of Horton's new club replacing his old one in the Premiership. That, he said laconically, is an irrelevant prospect, one that bothers him not one bit—but it was said with the merest hint of a smile and for that he can be forgiven.

"I didn't walk out of there being a failure, or being shot at by the crowd, so that didn't knock me down. I didn't walk out deflated, feeling I was a failure. I walked out with my head held high and thought I had done a good job."

In his playing days, Horton

Horton's latest achievement is possibly the most impressive of all. Huddersfield had just been promoted to the first division when Neil Warnock, the popular manager, left after a disagreement. Horton looked for all the world like the patsy who was being set up to take the rap. Instead, Huddersfield are in the top three in the Endsleigh Insurance League first division and have reached the last 16 of the FA Cup for the first time in 24 years. He is thinking of promotion, despite all the

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TO LOCK HORNS
IN EIDER CHASE

SPORT

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 17 1996

Victory over Wales promises to bring unlikely grand slam a step nearer

Scotland looking back to the future

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

NOT the least of Scotland's achievements this season has been to leap from being a lost cause in rugby union's five-nations' championship to potential grand slam champions. To span such a chasm in four weeks suggests that the truth always lay somewhere in between.

However, the coveted grand slam will appear close to reality if the rejuvenated Scots overcome Wales at National Stadium in Cardiff this afternoon. Regardless of Scotland's meagre record in Cardiff — only four victories since the Second World War — Scots may prefer to remember that two of those wins, in 1984 and 1990, preceded grand slams.

It is enough to send Jim Telfer, the national coaching director, scowling into the tea

flowing, expansive rugby. Easy to talk about, not always so easy to achieve, but both sides have shown that they can do so. Not so much for entertainment's sake, either, but because that is the style most suited to the forces at their disposal.

"Spectators have to be satisfied with good performances," Telfer said. "Entertainment is part and parcel of how you want to play the game. We have always tried to play constructive rugby with limited resources and sometimes with meagre ball."

Telfer genuinely respects the Welsh system that produces such competitive players from school and youth rugby. Against that, he set the commitment and dedication that Scotland's national teams seem to have bottled as a speciality. "We have always had players who miss out on the accolades, players like Alastair Campbell or Chris Gray, for example, and now Stuart Campbell," Telfer said.

"These are players who have taken it upon themselves to make their mark in rugby, but I am surprised how quickly this group has gelled together with no apparent concern. At the moment, we have 15 blokes who are not world-class but are working very hard to prove the doubters wrong."

Some of the cement in Scotland's game will be provided by Scott Hastings, who wins his sixtieth cap and stands one behind Gavin, his brother, in Scotland's all-time list. Scott is 31, but, according to Telfer, persists in behaving as though he were 21 with his whole career stretching before him. "To remain an international for ten years is a remarkable achievement," Telfer said.

"You have to be lucky with injuries and remarkably resilient, but, apart from his skills and commitment, which have always made him a key member of the team, Scott remains a wonderful enthusiast, a very positive influence on the rest of the squad."

Wales's young and inexperienced unit, having carried the game so successfully to England that they lost by only six points, will look for more of the same in front of a supportive crowd — though that has not stopped them attending to some basics.

They have worked hard on their scrummaging, doubtless in the hope that the Scotland back row can be tied down, and also on their kicking. No side in the northern hemi-



Arwel Thomas, of Wales, is the centre of attention in training for the game with Scotland today. Photograph: Huw Evans

sphere produces quicker ball than Scotland, yet that is exactly what Wales require so that they can release their young backs.

"We made mistakes against England which cost us two tries," Jonathan Humphreys, the Wales hooker and captain, said, "but you learn a lot from each game, about yourself and how the game can be played, and we know that the style we are after does work. Some people have questioned whether it can work at the top level — well, New Zealand and Scotland have proved it."

Nevertheless, the stakes have changed in a subtle way since the last round of the championship, two weeks ago. Every game that Scotland win produces a greater degree of expectation and a more searching examination of individuals, such as Gregor

Townsend, the adventurous stand-off half, or Rowen Shepherd, whose glorious running against France provoked a mass of laudatory adjectives.

Yet there is a buoyancy in Wales, an expectation that, if the season is to mean anything, it must start with a home victory. The series with Scotland — this is the hundredth meeting of the countries and Wales lead 54-43 — has no burden attached, unlike recent games with Ireland, who have relished visits to Cardiff.

The only tradition fixed to this game is one of running rugby, which may not be easy to sustain if the weather lives up to forecasts of wind and rain. Yet the Scots shrugged off such handicaps in Dublin, took a positive attitude and won. What they have done once, they can do again.

WALES

W J L Thomas (Llanelli)
I C Evans (Llanelli)
I B Davies (Neath)
N G Davies (Llanelli)
W T Proctor (Llanelli)
A C Thomas (Bristol)
R Howley (Bridgend)
A L P Lewis (Cardiff)
J M Humphreys (Cardiff)
J D Davies (Neath)
E W Lewis (Cardiff)
G O Llewellyn (Neath)
R G Jones (Llanelli)
H T Taylor (Cardiff)

Referee: J Dumé (France) TV: BBC1
REPLACEMENTS: 16 G Thomas (Bridgend), 17 N R Jenkins (Pontypridd), 18 A P Moore (Cardiff), 19 S Williams (Neath), 20 L Madox (Cardiff), 21 G R Jenkins (Swansea)

SCOTLAND

15 R J S Shepherd (Melrose)
14 C A Joiner (Melrose)
13 S Hastings (Watsonians)
12 I C Jardine (Stirling County)
11 M Dods (Northampton)
10 G J P Townsend (Northampton)
9 B W Redpath (Melrose)
8 D W Hutton (Bath)
7 K D McKendrick (Stirling County)
6 P H Wright (Roughmuck)
5 R I Wainwright (Watsonians)
4 S J Campbell (Dundee HSFP)
3 G W Weir (Newcastle)
2 I R Smith (Gloucester)
1 E W Peters (Bath)

Kick-off: 3.0 * denotes captain
REPLACEMENTS: 16 K M Logan (Stirling County), 17 G M Chalmers (Melrose), 18 G Armstrong (Newcastle), 19 S Murray (Edinburgh Academical), 20 A P Burnell (London Scottish), 21 J A Hay (Hawick)

FIVE NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	Pts
Scotland	2	2	0	0	36	24
England	2	1	0	1	33	30
France	2	1	0	1	29	31
Ireland	2	1	0	1	10	15
Wales	1	0	0	1	15	21

RESULTS: France 15 England 12, Ireland 10 Scotland 18, England 21 Wales 15, Scotland 19 France 14.

FIXTURES: Today: France v Ireland, Wales v Scotland, Mar 2: Ireland v Wales, Scotland v England, Mar 16: England v Ireland, Wales v France

leaves. "I can't see why Scotland should be favourites," he grumbled at Beachley yesterday as his players trained at the Royal Welch Fusiliers ground under the shadow of the Severn Bridge. Not that Telfer, who has a gleam in his eye more frequently these days, ever set much store by the public perception of his team.

Yet wins over Ireland and France have made Scotland the only unbeaten team in the championship, playing, moreover, in the style that England have talked about but singularly failed to match. Nor have France and Ireland, who meet in Paris today, discovered such rapturous freedom of expression that Wales seek to emulate.

If you accept all the predictions, the match in Cardiff today will be redolent with

Weary England have look of journeymen

FROM ALAN LEE
IN PESHAWAR

THIS World Cup is no place for faint hearts or reluctant travellers and, when England checked into their hotel in the frontier town of Peshawar last night, it was after a journey several hours longer than it takes to fly from London to Sydney. They have a day to recover before the first of two matches that they must win to remain in the competition.

The essential points ought to be gathered routinely. United Arab Emirates, England's opponents tomorrow, were resoundingly beaten by South Africa yesterday, while Holland, who meet New Zealand today and England on Thursday, have been struck down by stomach trouble.

England are not the only side to be suffering the chaotic consequences of some bizarre fixture planning, but this was a journey of grotesque invention. From Ahmedabad, scene of their opening defeat, they zig-zagged north to Delhi, southwest to Karachi and then north again to Peshawar. It entailed three flights, an overnight transit, countless airport queues and a door-to-door trip of 27 hours.

evening, there was an unshaven weariness to the team impossible to ignore. Jack Russell sketched a drawing of a fellow passenger, Robin Smith, scanning the business pages of a newspaper with entrepreneurial interest and Peter Martin, an avid photographer, fretted about batteries for his camera. Others stared ahead, unable to comprehend that this marathon could be inflicted in what is allegedly cricket's global event.

Perhaps we should not be surprised. The organisation of this tournament has, after all, been anything but slick and it is daily being condemned by a bickering backcloth. Yesterday, it came in the shape of a dispute over sponsorship rights between Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola, renewed safety fears about the Calcutta ground that could affect the staging of the semi-final, and a protest from the Pakistani Government, claiming that the disputed territory of Kashmir was depicted as Indian at the opening ceremony. Amid such bedlam, the logistics of civilised travel for the competing teams seems to have been forgotten.

England, at least, can now settle in one base for a complete week and, within it, they

should ensure their passage to the quarter-finals. The UAE, a sensitive amalgam of seven Emirates, certain of whom have been falling out spectacularly in their cricket administration, won the ICC Trophy last year without losing a game. That was a surprise. If they so much as trouble England tomorrow, it will rank as the greatest upset in World Cup history.

They are an appealing curiosity, however, not least in the style of Sultan Zairawani, their captain, whose leg spin is said to be less impressive than his Lamborghini. Yet despite rigorous preparation, that has taken them to one-day tournaments in Sharjah, India and Pakistan in recent months, they are genuine also-rans in an event with a sharp division between those who might win the trophy and those who cannot.

WORLD CUP DETAILS

GROUP A	P	W	T	L	NR	Pts
RESULT: West Indies beat Zimbabwe by 6 wickets, Hyderabad.						
Word India	1	1	0	0	0	0
Australia	0	0	0	0	0	0
India	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kenya	0	0	0	0	0	0
Zimbabwe	1	0	0	0	0	0
FIXTURES: Today: Sri Lanka v Australia, Colombo; Tomorrow: India v Kenya, Colombo; Feb 21: India v West Indies, Colombo; Feb 23: Australia v Kenya, Vankhadeshram; Feb 25: Sri Lanka v West Indies, Colombo; Feb 26: Kenya v Zimbabwe, Nagpur; Mar 2: India v Sri Lanka, Delhi; Mar 4: West Indies v Australia, Jaipur; Mar 6: India v Zimbabwe, Kanpur; Mar 8: Sri Lanka v Kenya, Kenya.						
* Australia and West Indies have said that they will forfeit these matches.						
GROUP B	P	W	T	L	NR	Pts
RESULTS: New Zealand beat England by 100 runs, Ahmedabad; South Africa beat UAE by 169 runs, Rawalpindi.						
South Africa	1	1	0	0	0	0
New Zealand	1	0	0	0	0	0
Pakistan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holland	0	0	0	0	0	0
UAE	1	0	0	1	0	0
FIXTURES: Today: Holland v New Zealand, Hyderabad; Tomorrow: England v Pakistan, UAE; Lahore Feb 26: England v South Africa, Rawalpindi; Feb 28: Pakistan v Holland, Lahore; Feb 27: New Zealand v UAE, Ferozabad; Feb 28: Pakistan v South Africa, Karachi; Mar 1: Holland v UAE, Lahore; Mar 3: Pakistan v England, Karachi; Mar 5: Holland v South Africa, Rawalpindi; Mar 6: Pakistan v New Zealand, Gujranwala.						
* Top four in each group qualify for quarter-finals. Two points for a win, one for a tie and no result.						
QUARTER-FINALS: Mar 9: A1 v B4, Ferozabad; A2 v B3, Singapore; Mar 11: B1 v A4, Karachi; B2 v A3, Madras; SEMI-FINALS: Mar 12: Ferozabad winner v Singapore winner; Chennai Mar 14: Karachi winner v Madras winner; CHAMPIONSHIP: FINAL: Mar 17: Lahore.						



Rising son

Jamie Redknapp on football, the fans and the glory

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SIMON BARNES 4

IN PRAISE OF THE
GOALKEEPER
TURNED REVOLUTIONARY

Redknapp's hamstring causes concern for Liverpool

By PETER BALL

JAMIE REDKNAPP, the Liverpool and England midfielder player, has suffered another setback on his return from a hamstring injury. Redknapp will miss the delayed FA Cup fourth-round tie away to Shrewsbury Town tomorrow after limping out of a reserve game against Stoke City on Thursday.

Yesterday, he was sent to hospital to undergo a scan, raising fears that he may be facing a further lay-off. Redknapp had made one appearance for the first team on his return to fitness from the injury — which had kept him out of action for nearly three months — playing the last 15 minutes as substitute at Queens Park Rangers on Sunday. With the European championship finals approaching, any long absence for Redknapp would be a blow to England as well as to his club.

The delay in the tie, which has been postponed twice because of bad weather, has at least been good news for Paul Evans, Shrewsbury's Wales Under-21 midfielder. Sent off against Fulham in the third round, Evans received a four-match suspension, but the postponements mean that he is now available to play against the club that he, like half the Shrewsbury team, supported.

Redknapp apart, Liverpool have no injury problems for the match. Neil Ruddock returns to the squad after suspension, but Roy Evans, the manager, is expected to retain the side that beat Queens Park Rangers.

"We've seen this week with West Ham and Everton what can happen, so we mustn't treat Shrewsbury lightly," Evans said. "We're as vulnerable as anyone."

Parag not as vulnerable as Manchester City, who go to Old Trafford tomorrow without Garry Flitcroft, who is suspended, and with doubts about Ian Brightwell and Keith Curle, their captain, for a game in which they desperately need to be at full strength. "If they are both OK, I will be quietly confident of getting something," Alan Ball, the City manager, said.

Alex Ferguson's first match as Manchester United's man-

ager was against City. United won then 1-0, although, should that be the score tomorrow, there may be more discontent among the United followers than City's, such is the disparity between the clubs ten years on. United are without Gary Neville, who is suspended, but welcome back Steve Bruce, their captain, to virtually their strongest side.

Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, has agreed to drug testing on players being extended after the positive tests on Roger Stanislaus and Craig Whittington this year. However, Taylor said that he will resist any attempt by the Sports Council to do tests at players' homes.

Mike Walker, the former Norwich City and Everton manager, has emerged as a



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candidate for the manager's job at Burnley. "When I was manager at Everton, I used to go to Burnley quite a lot to watch games and it is a tremendous set-up with a lot of potential," Walker said.

Doug Sharpe yesterday retook control of Swansea City, the troubled second division club, after it was confirmed that its sale to Michael Thompson, the businessman, had fallen through.

The chairmanship of Swansea City AFC required a six-day week commitment which meant my other business projects could not receive the attention they demand," Thompson said. "I have reluctantly decided not to proceed with the acquisition of the club." Sharpe's return could also mean a return to Vetch Field for Frank Burrows as manager after the short-lived reign of Kevin Cullis came to an end in midweek.

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aboard
the new
boat from
Mandalay

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OFFERS



£10,000 of
British
weekend
breaks
to be won

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A rose
garden in
Belgium
fit for
a prince

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BOOKS



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Floyd
gets too
long a
stretch

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WEEKEND

THE TIMES SATURDAY FEBRUARY 17 1996

THE STING IN THE CLINTONS' TALE

By Peter Stothard



Four years ago this weekend I was a "scorp" in New Hampshire. I was not a powerful "big-foot scorp" nor even a favoured "small-city scorp" but still a scorpion, a reporter, with a mild sting in my tail, covering the rise of Bill Clinton.

The two biggest stories of that time have almost faded from memory now. Gennifer Flowers, the bottle-blond who claimed that Clinton was her lover and had listening-impaired tapes to prove it, is now just a footnote in the dictionaries of oddly-spelt girls' names. The then explosive allegation that Clinton dodged the Vietnam draft has been defused by repetition: it is used today only by the most rebarbative Republicans.

But, while the known facts of the last New Hampshire primary election may have died, the facts-behind-the-facts are back. They form the central events of *Primary Colors*, a cult novel of campaign sex (qualitatively different, it is said, from any other kind), campaign intrigue (peculiarly impersonal and careless) and campaign banter between husband and wife ("he could be a great man," said the would-be First Lady without looking at her husband, "if he weren't such a faithless, thoughtless, disorganised, undisciplined shit").

The book is by Anonymous. Washingtonians spend much of their time these days wondering who Anonymous is. What they know is that it can only have been written by someone with sources very, very close to Mr and Mrs Clinton in New Hampshire, Arkansas and New York in 1992.

We foreign journalists play traditionally little part in the electoral machine which is now, once again, roaring across the snow of north eastern America. So we do not feature much in *Primary Colors*. The only reference in the book to a non-American scorp is to a Swedish television crew whose visibility at a campaign event is a clear sign to insiders that the real story has moved on.

But we were certainly there in New Hampshire '92: in Bill Clinton's case we had been there in full British force before all the American papers. In the headquarters of Media Inc it took a long time for the cent to drop that a Governor of backward Arkansas might win the Democratic nomination over the favourite sons of Massachusetts, California and New York.

We were interested in Bill Clinton because Bill Clinton knew Britain. He had studied at Oxford. And he gave "full ear", as Anonymous puts it in his particular and linguistically pungent style.

In the early days of the campaign Clinton listened and talked even to scorps whose stings could not hurt him and whose support was of almost no use. He had few "vois" to get between us and him. The busloads of volunteering Friends of Bill did not show up until the battle was nearly won.

There was always a small scattering of "muffins", the mostly female college students who pursue the hot candidate like camp-followers of a victorious army. But the candidate himself was often virtually alone, sometimes seeming to rehearse to us the few lines about foreign policy which occasionally crept into his speeches.

Our reporters' lives were ruled by campaign gossip. But we did not suspect one half of what Anonymous describes now. The only time that the fictional Governor Jack Stanton mentions Russia in New Hampshire is to buy off a blackmailing Lithuanian bus-driver who wants to spill some sexual harassment beans to the local pencils. (NOTE: all pencils are scorps but not all scorps, who include television reporters, are pencils.)

The Governor in the novel also has to find time to appease Fat Willie, the Arkansas barbecue-man whose backward daughter is a quickie gubernatorial conquest on the trail-side. The campaign sexual order, it seems, is that strategists "bake" muffins, the candidate bakes anything in a skirt that moves (including the prim librarian on a stop-by at an adult-literacy programme) and the narrator, Stanton's deputy campaign boss, bakes Daisie the spin-doctor (but it is only campaign sex, cosy, comforting, cold-ridden: the real thing has to wait until

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INSIDE STORY

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'She drops his hand as if it were a dead rat'



The Clintons slogging along the campaign trail in New York in 1991



For Stanton read Clinton? The President celebrates at an inaugural ball having nearly been 'toasted' by Jennifer Flowers. Bill and Hillary, here with their daughter Chelsea, presented a united front on television

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Stanton loses and they can all go to Bermuda.

The narrator, whose fictional name is Henry Burton but whose real name is today sought by the cream of US journalism, also takes Mrs Stanton. But, well, it is only once, and at a very low point in the campaign's fortunes.

The candidate's wife is the undisputed political leader of the novel's events. She is the heroine. It is she who listens to the narrator when he miserably recalls the "lulus", the artificial sweeteners without which nothing in his previous political job in Congress could get done. It is she who skilful use of language diverts the press from their prey: with a well-chosen word or two she can scatter the gulls from the garbage barge of her husband's campaign.

Washingtonians still argue today about the extent to which Hillary Clinton rules the White House. In 1996 it is part of the President's burden to defend his wife against charges of financial deceit and political cover-up: the focus is on Mrs Clinton's role in the Whitewater affair. In 1992 all the defending was on the other side.

How, for example, was the Governor to counter the allegations of Jennifer Flowers? In *Primary Colors* Mrs Stanton hears the news of the scandalous tapes and says, unusually, "Henry, could you excuse us please?". She slaps her husband round the face to make him even more pink than usual and then has to decide what to do. The would-be First Couple choose to give a 20 minute state-of-the-marriage address, delivered on television to a massive national audience after the Superbowl. The price of failure: the whole Stanton campaign would be "toasted".

Four years ago, if Mrs Clinton had not taken part in that most bizarre of broadcasts, there would almost certainly be no President Clinton

today. The book's account closely follows my memory of the event as it happened: at a difficult moment in the interview with some serious network scribes, she grasps his hand. In the book, she does the same, triumphantly admitting that "we did have some tough times in our marriage but we worked our way through it". When the studio lights go off, she drops his hand "as if it were a dead rat".

Anonymous's novel is more than a political roman à clef, of course, the author denies, for the record, that any of *Primary Colors* events happened at all. This author knows at close quarters about the way scribes consort with politicians. Since that is much of what modern American democracy is about, the novel helps its readers to understand much about modern American democracy.

Early in 1992 the big-shot scribes and their bosses were reluctant to repeat the confessions of Jennifer Flowers that had appeared on cable television and in a supermarket tabloid. At one point readers of *The Times* in London would have known much more about her story than many Americans. But, as Anonymous cor-

rectly analyses, American reporters found ways to write about it — at one remove.

"The scribes weren't reporting the truth, but how we dealt with the trash," writes the narrator. "The story hadn't really broken yet — and already it was one step removed: the press was reporting about how the candidate would deal with how the press would report about the story." And so it was. We were all in it one way or another, the much-distrusted national pencils, the much-distrusted local pencils, the television scribes and the British reporters whose allegations, dignified by distance, would occasionally feed back into the process from London.

Anonymous also describes well the mysteries of negative campaigning, of finding dirt on your opponent and being ready to use it. He calls it "oppor", the primal impulse, the headquarters of all tactics and strategy, the oldest and most dishonourable exercise linked to the Will to Power. While one part of Stanton's team is dealing with Barbecue Willie's daughter and the awkward personal result of his "defect by the funds on sex education" in Arkansas, another is preparing to smear his opponent over a dubious

land deal, a lulu too far. This mere threat of oppo is enough.

Why do politicians put up with the pressures of office-seeking, the discomfort, the fudges "the eternity of false smiles"? Some, says Anonymous, just want to win for the sake of winning "and they're willing to sell their souls, crawl through sewers, lie to the people, play to their worst fears". For others, certainly in his view for Bill Clinton, "it is the price you pay to lead". "You don't thank Abraham Lincoln was a whore before he was President?" asks Stanton. "He had to tell his little stories and smile his shit-eating back country grin. He did it all just so he'd get the opportunity, one day, to stand in front of the nation and appeal to the better angels of our nature."

Like President Clinton, the author of *Primary Colors* is a fierce optimist about what politicians can achieve. Despite his disgust with the process — bad meals, bad trips — he does not deride the urge for idealists to rise to the top in politics. He does not subscribe to determinist beliefs that politicians merely grab rewards of what would have happened even if they themselves had never existed. He loves the Clintons — and

he loves his presidential primary candidates, all of them.

We may not know the author's real name until financial results of the copyright-holding company, Machiavelliana Inc, have to be revealed to the tax authorities in 1997. Almost everyone in Washington who might have written it has been chased by other journalists in Washington who might have written it — and issued more or less comprehensive denials. My good friend and campaign watcher, Christopher Hitchens, has suggested his own list of suitably well-connected possibilities. He has also been seen signing copies in bookshops himself.

In response to promptings from my old haunts, I have even asked my secretive novelist wife, Sally Emerson, about her recent research trips to Washington. "Hmmm... that American novel you've been working on?" But she too denies authorship. Even the publisher, apparently, does not know where his latest best-seller has come from.

By the time that the truth is out, no one may be interested. Bill Clinton may not even be President. But he must be enjoying himself now as the Republicans take their turn to stomp through the New Hampshire snows, savaging each other amid the piles of damp posters and hotel pizza, struggling for the right sort of attention from the scribes, gulls and pencils. Even the most idealistic of presidents may some time like to make a millionaire of one of his admirers. Whether he knows who Anonymous is or not, President Clinton has achieved that end at last.

©The author is Editor of *The Times*. *Primary Colors* is published in Britain on Monday by Chatto & Windus (£15.99).

Cover image of the Clintons in 1992 by KATZ

Ruth Gledhill finds missionary zeal in Barbados

Singing for salvation



COCOONED in the artificial and sensuous world of their hotels, visitors to Barbados are often unaware that it is an intensely religious society. It can take a visit to a local Caribbean church to discover the strange contradictions in a tiny island which is partly reminiscent of middle-England 30 years ago, and partly akin to modern-day America.

Our taxi driver, Berkeley White, explained that the church into whose hands he was about to deliver us was one of the biggest on the island. Sure enough, when we arrived, the church was packed with nearly 1,800 people, the women in brightly coloured cottons, silks and sequins and the men, though fewer in number, also dressed in Sunday-best jacket and tie.

The Abundant Life Assembly church takes its name from John 10:10: "I am come that they might have life and that more abundantly."

The members of one of the most impressive church pop bands I have ever seen ascended the stage to take their places followed by the large gospel choir. The church is part of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies, the largest such grouping in the eastern Caribbean, founded in the 1940s by Canadian pentecostals.

The religious equivalent of a warm-up man put us in the mood for the lively worship to come. "Good morning to all of you," he announced with an enormous grin. "Have you said good morning to the person next to you? Have you turned round and blessed them?" This made a change from the stilted exchanges of the "peace" I was more used to. We all blessed each other with hugs and kisses,

and clapped and danced through our first gospel hymn, *There is Power in the Blood*. More songs followed, working the congregation to a pitch where some began murmuring strange things, "speaking in tongues" as it is known in charismatic congregations.

Then came an interjection which turned out to be the first of many in similar vein, but felt strange to me as someone used to an established church blessed with endowments where appeals for cash during worship are still, even today, fairly discreet. "When you invest money into mission, you know that it is something that is part of what God is doing," the worship leader said.

Later, we heard that the church gives 12,000 Barbados dollars each month to missionary work, equivalent to about £4,000. The pastor asked each one to pray for guidance on how much they should pledge, and promised he would not behave like a hire purchase company. "I will never send you a letter saying you are behind with your payments," he said. "It is between you and God."

Our preacher, the Rev. Gerry Gallimore, took to the stage. Jamaican-born, he had travelled to Barbados from Singapore, where he heads the missionary organisation Youth for Christ. His sermon, which seemed to become louder as he progressed and his enthusiasm grew, was compelling.

As the phrase "rock bottom" achieved new meaning for me, I prayed finally for salvation. As if reading my mind, Mr Gallimore stared at me and said: "Salvation is free but it ain't cheap." I left, materially poorer, physically weaker, but feeling profoundly changed and richer.

The Abundant Life Assembly, Bank Hall, St Michael, Barbados (001 809 427 9166).

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GARDEN ANSWERS



STEPHEN ANDERTON replies to readers' letters

Q A tree surgeon says that red-orange fungus at the base of my 40-year-old Scots pine is *Fomes annosus*, which attacks the roots, and that the tree should be felled. Is there any alternative, and is it safe to replant another large, containerised Scots pine? Mrs V. Burnett, Burley, Hampshire.

A *Fomes annosus*, or *Heterobasidion annosum* as it is now known, is a common killer of Scots pines. It is not curable, nor is it easy to tell how far the infection has spread underground, but with all such root rots the tree will eventually fall over. Better to have it felled, and have the stump ground out professionally and replaced with fresh soil before replanting. (This fungus can pass from root to root, or enter through stem damage above ground.) I would replace the pine with a deciduous tree. If you really want a Scots pine, plant a few little ones for a few pence each and see what happens, rather than spending large sums on containerised stock.

Q I wish to hide, quickly, a section of south-facing fence under a birch tree. To the left and right the fence is screened with laurel and escallonia. A rhododendron died here last winter, and later an escallonia. What should I plant? — Mrs Dransfield, Wimbledon, south London.

A Rhododendrons do not die easily. I suspect that in this position, with thirsty, shallow birch roots and laurel roots, and in the rain shadow of the fence, it began to die of drought in summer. The same with the escallonia. If

the area is dry and rooty, you may do better to plant old-fashioned, ironclad shrubs such as laurel, spotted laurel or the (slower) *Mahonia aquifolium*. Or you might train the large-leaved, yellow variegated ivy *Hedera colchica* 'Sulphur Heart' up the fence, with clumps of evergreen *Iris foetidissima* at its foot.

Q I have a bank of wild cyclamen and they are moving downhill. Can I replant the corms back at the top of the slope and, if so, when? The corms vary from 2in-3in across to small seedlings. — H.C. Maude, Canterbury, Kent.

A These hardy cyclamens readily seed and naturally migrate downwards. They are suited to poor soil or thin grass under the shade of trees. The smaller corms move best when, say, half an inch across, but larger ones can be moved, too, taking care to minimise root disturbance. In ideal conditions, cyclamens can grow several times larger than your largest corm, so at 2in-3in it is not too late to move them. Do this in late summer as the leaves begin to grow, retaining a plug of soil and enough root for them to anchor until established. Also, collect seedheads (easy to spot on those corkscrew stems) and scatter seed at the top of the slope.

Q Readers wishing to have their gardening problems answered should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington St, London E1 9XN. We regret that few personal answers can be given and that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times also regrets that enclosures accompanying letters cannot be returned.

Whiten the dark with carpets of snowdrops

Stephen Anderton tells how to tune in to the welcoming heralds of a new spring

Although I have never found the precise source of the quotation, a friend always used to quote Vita Sackville-West as saying: "You can never have too much white in a garden." This is probably true. In summer, any colour scheme can be emulsified with white *ad infinitum*, making the effect paler and paler, though not necessarily any less striking. In winter, when there are almost no hot colours about, white acquires a different importance. It somehow seems more at home, more significant and proper.

Snowdrops are the great winter whiteners and it would be hard to plant too many of them, though the everywhere-at-all-costs, wall-to-wall planting of anything is dreary. They lighten darkness so well. Any ground under trees or shrubs, hidden in summer perhaps, may be carpeted with snowdrops when the leaves are off the trees. They will not do so well in rooty, dry shade, but in a fertile soil with adequate moisture, they multiply effortlessly from year to year: pale heads "heavy as metal", as Ted Hughes describes them.

Plant them in sheets, dense in some parts and thinner in others. The common *Galanthus nivalis* will seed itself and spread naturally, and build up into vigorous clumps, even carpeted in grass. A new carpet planted at its centres soon thickens into a seemingly continuous cover — especially with occasional disturbance from gardeners or moles.

Some of the other named varieties of snowdrop, available from specialist suppliers, are far less vigorous and better suited to use in borders. When planting for a natural effect, vary the distances between plants, putting some areas in at 2in to 3in centres, and others more widely. There should also be variation in the size of clumps, from single bulbs to twos and threes and even a dozen. The best time to divide and replant

GARDENS TO VISIT

THE following gardens open for snowdrop time (check for flowering by telephone).
Anglesy Abbey, Lode, Cambridgeshire (01223 811200): Sat-Sun until Feb 25, 11am-4pm. £3.20, children half price.
Belsay Hall, Northumberland (01661 881636): daily, 10am-4pm. £2.60, children half price.
Fontaine Abbey, Ripon, North Yorks (01764 608888): daily until the end of Mar, 10am-5pm. £4, children half price.
Hodsock Priory, Blyth, near Workop, Nottinghamshire (01909 591204): open weekdays noon-4pm, weekends 10am-4pm, until Mar 10. £2, children free.
Knockwath Park, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk (01284 735270): daily, 7am-7pm. £2 per car.
Kingston Lacey, Wimborne Minster, Dorset (01202 853402): daily until Feb 18, 11am-4pm. £1, under-16s free.
Painswick Rococo Garden, Painswick, Gloucestershire (01452 813204): Wed-Sun, 11am-5pm. £2.75, children £1.50.

is at flowering time, or just after, because the whiteness helps to show how dense a planting is being achieved. They will after planting, of course, unless you divide them only into clumps. But no watering is necessary. They pick up again after a few days, though the flowers are lost for that year. The important thing is to lift and replant them quickly.

And what to plant with snowdrops? Yellow aconites are the classic combination and work well among tree roots where the winter sun can penetrate. Similarly, they can be grown among the marbled leaves of autumn-flowering *Cyclamen hederifolium*. Alternatively, you can pair snowdrops with the violent pink of



The common snowdrop, *Galanthus nivalis*, will spread naturally in clumps, even when planted in grass

spring-flowering *C. coum*, or its white variant, *album*.

In recent years, more and more gardens with spectacular displays of snowdrops have been making special openings at this time of year. At Painswick Rococo Garden, Gloucestershire, the plants are thought to have been widely planted since at least 1795, and it was for James Atkins, head gardener there in the 1860s, that the robust form 'Atkinsii' was named. At Belsay Castle, Northumberland, Lady Anne Ettrick is said to have planted snowdrops as early as the 1720s.

Guessing the exact timing of a snowdrop display is never easy. It varies from north to south and

according to aspect. A fortnight before the common snowdrops come *Galanthus elwesii*, with broad, attractively grey leaves. The earliest snowdrops arrive before Christmas: *G. reginae-olgae* appears (without its leaves) in September, and *G. corcyrensis* shortly after.

The best snowdrops I have seen so far this year were in watercolour paintings by Jenny Jowett at the Royal Horticultural Society's January show in London. Each painting, mostly of named varieties, included cut-away close-ups of the subtle differences in their markings. They were selling fast, and clearly recognised as the best way to appreciate these polite distinctions.

- Divide and replant clumps of aconites and snowdrops while still in full leaf, and even flower.
- Protect early blossom on wall fruit trees against frost with polythene, netting, or paper.
- Cut back to two to three buds the long wands of growth on wisteria.
- Sow, over heat, bedding plants requiring an early start, such as begonia, lobelia and anemone.
- Remove old, dead leaves of Helleborus orientalis before flowering starts.

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GARDENING

5

The prince of Belgian rose gardens

Two famous gardens in Belgium are open to the public in June. This week: Château d'Hex

On the first and third weekend of June, two women, who live 45 minutes apart in the Belgian province of Limbourg, open their remarkable gardens to the public. Neither of them is Belgian. Comtesse Nanda d'Ursel was born in Italy. Patricia van Rossmalen is from New Zealand. Marriage brought them to the gardens they have now tended for 35 years. Renowned in Belgium, the gardens have a lot to interest the British gardener.

This week we focus on the comtesse's gardens, part of a vast estate of 150 acres and home to 350 varieties of old and species roses. The potager alone comprises three and a half acres.

The comtesse, an art scholar and mother of seven, took over the Château d'Hex in 1959 when it passed on to her husband Michel, a great-great nephew of its creator, the Prince of Liège. She was lucky that Hex had never been abandoned so no restoration work was necessary. After removing the blazing salvia from the parterre, she was free to move forward and develop the full potential of the garden.

The Château d'Hex was built in 1770 as a summer residence by Charles de Velbruck, Prince Evêque of Liège, a patron of the arts and letters, with a keen interest in hunting and gardens. In the Jardin du Prince, named after him because his bedroom door opened on to it, a trio of China roses brought back for the prince by the East India Company, more than 200 years ago, are still growing on their original roots: 'Old Blush', 'R. chinensis multipetala' and a third, the identity of which remains a mystery.

Another of the prince's legacies is the Chinese Garden, where a Buddha has been sitting cross-legged under his pagoda, smiling and sticking out his tongue whenever the wind blows, for more than 200 years. In spring, a bird can claim the Buddha's accommodating belly for her nest, and a few weeks later the Buddha is alive with twittering.

After laying out the formal gardens, the Prince turned the rest of his estate into the first British parkland in Belgium, by introducing Aberdeen Angus and Welsh Black Sheep

The old gardener timed his sowing and harvesting according to the feast days of the saints

which are still there today. Today, 350 varieties of old and species roses are grown throughout the garden, potager and parkland. Even the Chinese garden has two miniature carpeting roses of 'R. yakushimanensis', grown from seed the comtesse collected in Japan. Elsewhere, they drip down walls, hang over balustrades, weave into shrubs, climb trees. The strikingly placed 'R. Veusta Pendula' is draped over gates that open on to a two-kilometre avenue of plane trees crossing the estate.

A particularly beautiful rose, not available in Britain, is a vigorous 19th-century rambler, 'Paul Noel'. It is a seductive mix of colours - faded rose tinged with pale yellow and salmon - with the same healthy, glossy foliage as 'New Dawn', producing a few flowers here and there in autumn. The high walls around the enormous southwest facing potager, create a microclimate for tender roses which scramble against it, providing the protection they need.

In 1990, the comtesse brought Hex into the 20th century by asking Jacques Wirtz to redesign the parterre terraces on the southeast side of the château. The Belgian is

everywhere these days - redesigning the Tuileries gardens in Paris at the request of the late President François Mitterrand. His plan for Hex was ingenious. Using three, simple elements - grass, gravel and the box hedges that are his trademark - Wirtz has created an unadorned design that seems to flow out of the façade of the château.

The potager is almost as well known as the collection of roses, with many roses growing in borders alongside the wide variety of rare fruits and vegetables. When the comtesse arrived at the château it was looked after by an old gardener who timed all his sowing and harvesting according to the feast days of the saints. On rainy days he wove baskets that he used to harvest fruits and vegetables in the potager. During the winter he carved



A Buddha has been sitting cross-legged under his pagoda in the Chinese Garden at Château d'Hex for more than 200 years. The gardens, comprising more than 150 acres, are home to 350 varieties of old and species roses

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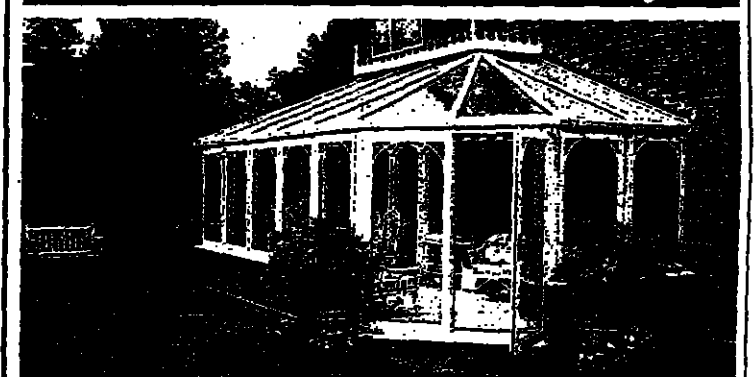
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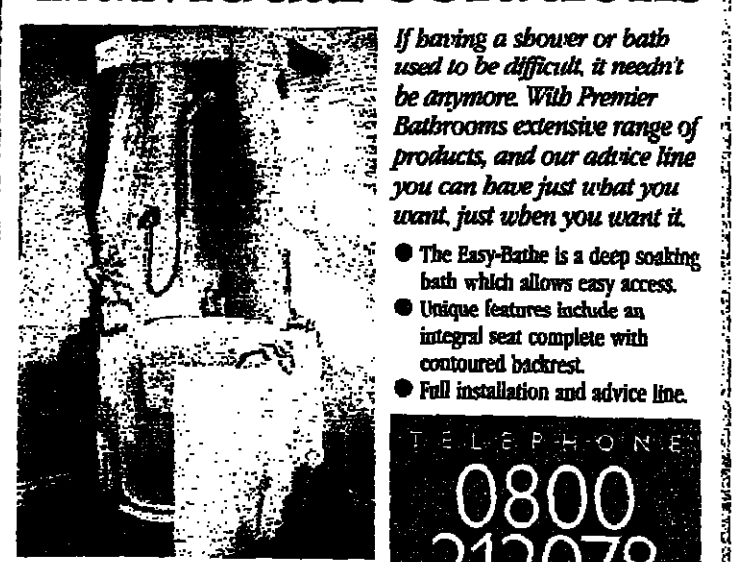


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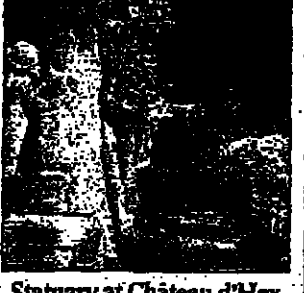
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Statue at Château d'Hex

Critical to be kind

A reviewer's integrity is under constant conflicting pressures

I have been reviewing books for six years, but of the 58 reviews I have written, 30 have been in the past 18 months. Of those 58 books, I would classify nine as absolute horrors, 17 as various shades of indifferent, and 32 as ranging from good to exceptional. This does not mean a great deal. It is merely a reflection of my taste, my opinions and my preference to err on the side of generosity.

Should you judge all books using the same criteria? There is no point reviewing a blockbuster as you might review a serious novel or biography or social history. For example, I did not approach Anthony Storr's *Mind and the*

reviewers have their *bêtes noires* and snobbery is mine. Originally I was going to be marginally kinder but I disliked it so much that I decided a reluctance to say so would be dishonest. That was probably right, but on reflection I regret it a little. Imagining how much pain the review may have caused the author worried me. It is never fun demolishing a piece of work in which someone else has invested a tremendous amount. As a writer myself, I know only too well how much time, energy, love and hope are poured into a book and how terrible a bad review can make you feel.

Nevertheless, if you are not prepared to write a bad review, when something really marvellous falls into your lap, the validity of your praise is diminished. Compromise only compromises you. Of course, there is no guarantee that someone whose book you have criticised will not do the same to you. Yet my second book was given a lovely review by a writer whose own work I had attacked in print six months earlier, proving that in some admirable cases integrity can override a desire for revenge.

I have not been quite so generous. A few months ago I was sent for review a book by someone who hated my last one, so I sent it back. Perhaps I should have reviewed it, but I was concerned that my hostility, however unforgiving, was likely to cloud my judgement. I had no desire to rubbish the book, but I felt that it would get a fairer reading elsewhere.

In the end, though, there is no way of knowing how effective reviews are. Kate Atkinson won the Whitbread prize after many excellent reviews. The consistent praise heaped upon the interviewer Tony Parker has not yet turned him into a household name. Vincenzi sells more books than many writers. And Chang-rae Lee, whose novel *Native Speaker* I reviewed for this paper and chose, along with Atkinson's, as one of the two most outstanding books I had reviewed in 1995, remains almost unheard of.

However, it is also your duty to seek out redeeming features. It is easier to isolate weaknesses than strengths, to resort to sarcasm than strive towards generosity, but it is wrong. Kindness may not be glamorous but it rarely hurts. When kindness dishonest? Four weeks ago I tore apart a novel by Elizabeth Peewee on these pages because I thought it not only boring and unoriginal but snobbish. This was unfortunate for the author: all

Outlaw hero or bank-robbing thug, there is less to a famous desperado than this thick novel, says Erica Wagner

Pretty Boy runs to fat

■ PRETTY BOY FLOYD
By Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana
Orion, £16.99

Like John Dillinger and Bonnie and Clyde, he has entered American legend; this novel, an expansion of a screenplay written by the authors for Warner Brothers in 1993, tells his story.

But despite the book's size and heft, there is not much of a story to tell. Floyd, handsome and charming as his mother suggests, falls into a life of crime because he is bored and a little greedy, and finds that once he has started, it is hard to stop. Despite

his affection for his young wife Ruby and their son Dempsey, he takes up with various women of dubious morals, including the splendidly named Whizbang Red — the very image of the Whore with a Heart of Gold.

As such, she cannot help being a

cliché — a far worse evil than prostitution as far as novels are concerned — and sadly she is only one of many. This is disappointing, because McMurtry, writing alone, has otherwise proved himself adept at avoiding such bunkum, despite dealing with such easily hackneyed subjects as cowboys and Indians. But Floyd's cowboy accomplice, George Birdwell, seems straight out of a spaghetti western.

So Floyd robs some banks; he runs

out of money; he robs again. He goes back to Ruby; he takes up with Whizbang or Beulah; and so on and so forth to the inevitable bullet-riddled end.

The book's ramblings are not displeasing: it is perfectly enjoyable and I cried at the end. But I would have wished, too, for a greater structure to have been imposed on Floyd's aimless life. The authors tell us, in their "collaborators' note" that for each day's work "L. M." provided a sketchy five pages, which "D. O." padded out into ten. You cannot help but imagine the streamlined novel we might have had without that quotidian expansion.

Too white a shade of pale

Walter Ellis on a bizarre true story of black race prejudice

MARSHA HUNT is best remembered in Britain for her singing career in the 1960s and 1970s and for the fact that Mick Jagger is the father of her daughter, Karis. Later, she became an accomplished actress and, more recently, a novelist. It was in the spring of 1991 that she discovered, via a telephone call from an American cousin, that her grandmother, Ernestine, whom she had long assumed to be dead,



Hunt: shocking account

was in fact living in a home in Memphis, Tennessee.

Ernestine, now aged 98, had been diagnosed as "mentally unstable" in 1925 and confined for more than half a century in the Western State Hospital, Tennessee. Her husband, Blair, was a headmaster, a minister of religion and a pillar of his local community. But for all that she was young and pretty, a college graduate and the mother of his three sons, she appears to have been dumped without ceremony.

What shocks in this account

■ REPOSSESSING ERNESTINE
By Marsha Hunt
HarperCollins, £15.99

of Ernestine's rediscovery is not so much the fact that a young woman, with so much to give, was condemned to life imprisonment without cause, but that throughout her long life it has been her pale skin that has most entranced her.

Her own mother had been half German-Jewish, and this meant that neither whites nor blacks fully accepted her as one of their own. Ernestine, with her blonde hair and blue eyes, obviously attracted Blair and had borne him three sons by the time she was 21. Soon after, though, she was committed and the Reverend settled down with a darker second wife.

Hunt repeats over and over her opinion that, since slavery, negro class culture has always been defined by skin colour and hair: the lighter the skin and the straighter the hair, the better. "If you're brown, you're right; if you're black, step back" went the rhyme. Ernestine's tragedy was that she had apparently gone a step too far and was no longer recognised as black.

Hunt has since rescued her and found a home for her close to relatives in Boston. But she cannot unmake the past. "What makes people avoid death after they cease to be interested in life?" she asks.

She does not come up with the answer.



Yves Montand delivers the Gallic shrug so vital to the game of *pétanque* — from *The Taste of Provence* by Martine Bouchet and Prosper Assouline (Editions Assouline, £35)

Looking for Ms Write

CAROLINE UPCHER has worked in the film industry, spent 20 years in publishing and once achieved an oblique celebrity as the ghost writer of Naomi Campbell's *Swan*.

Falling for Mr Wrong is her first novel under her own name and, for subject matter, she has stuck close to home. Polly de Soto, a literary agent, has just been deserted by her husband, Johnny, a film producer. So she is single once again, just like her ghostly best friend, Joan, a showbiz journalist, and her nymphomaniac stepdaughter, Luana, a casting agent. Meanwhile, her favourite client, Zoe, is having trouble with the supermodel whose

■ FALLING FOR MR WRONG
By Caroline Upcher
Orion, £9.99

novel she is ghostwriting. Use what you know, is Upcher's philosophy. Polly struggles to get her own agency off the ground and begins the search for Mr Right, all within the small triangle of Notting Hill, Soho and South Kensington. But once she has sold the screen rights of a client's novel to her former husband, everyone decamps to the South of France for the shoot. The film — *Mr Wrong* — concerns a playboy-cum-serial killer; its star is one Hector O'Neill, a delicious

hunk with a dirt-poor Irish background. And the script becomes a play-within-a-play as he, metaphorically, slays all the women in the novel.

As one might expect, this story comes professionally packaged. What is disappointing is the banality of its ideas and, by the end, the dreariness of its setting. Polly's affair with Hector on the Côte d'Azur may be average fantasy stuff of servants, swimming-pools and steamy sex but, hell, at least it is escapism. And after two-thirds of a novel set in the lower divisions of literary London, we are gasping for it.

GILL HORNEY

Tease before bedtime

■ DANCE WITH ME
By Louise Doughty
Touchstone, £9.99

BET AND Iris live parallel lives and, it becomes gradually and shudderingly apparent, inhabit parallel universes as well. In this tricky, odd and very funny novel, it is hard to tell what is real and what is virtual reality but it does not matter much. Delivering up solid facts is not Louise Doughty's style: she is a player of slippery, literary games and a superb tease.

Bet inherits a house and a fortune from a recent lover, Peter, killed in a car crash. Sharp, knowing and sassy, she soon realises that there is something murky about the arrangement and does some sleuthing into Peter's affairs, in both senses of the word.

Meanwhile, Iris, one of the many women whom Peter has chewed up and spat out, sits moodily at her computer in a terrifyingly decrepit office block, trying to come to terms with loneliness, a broken heart and shadowy figures slithering along the corridors.

Both women have a lot to say about sex and the single girl, Bet, is insouciantly promiscuous — a shrewd anti-romantic who regards men as some amusing form of lowlife. When one of her lovers indicates that he feels nothing for her, she reports crisply "this is something of a blow to my ego because I find it utterly unreasonable that any man should not fall hysterically in love with me. However, if he was hysterically in love with me, I would be completely horrified because he is shorter than me and not a very nice person." Yet in spite of her ironic detachment, she believes that "you must never forget for one minute how many reasons there are for a man — any man — to hate you".

Iris is as self-aware as Bet, "in complete control of her delusions", but not nearly so up on sexual etiquette. She is bewildered when men behave badly. "They ask you to have sex with them but they don't want to. Or they want to but they want you not to want to." The fates of these two enmesh and twist together. Surroundings become increasingly scary: ghosts are seen, or imagined; people are raised from the dead. Sometimes, the gruesome pranks that Doughty delights in can seem a bit too heady but her observations on women's lives are breathtakingly original.

PENNY PERRICK

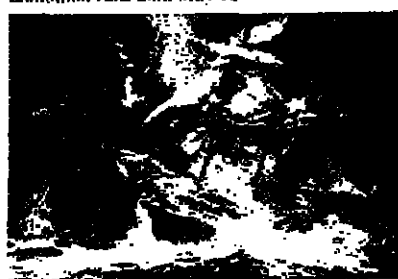
THE TIMES AND BARCLAYS PREMIER OFFER

HALF TERM SPECIAL EVENTS AT MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Quest for a Pirate

At the City Art Centre, Edinburgh
Experience a real pirate's life and see his treasure, including three-arms of silver and gold coins and the large collection of gold African (native West African) jewellery. This fascinating exhibition takes you back in a multi-media "time gallery" to experience the lives of two men, separated by three centuries, but united in their thirst for the treasure in *The Whydah*, which sank off Cape Cod in 1717.

Admission: £1.50 adults, £1 children and 2 children/1 adult & 3 children
Passport holders: £1 off adult admission
2 Market Street, EH1 1DE Tel: 0131 529 3994
Mon, Tue, Sat 10am-5pm
Wed, Thurs, Fri 10am-6pm
Sun 11am-5pm
Exhibition runs until Mar 12



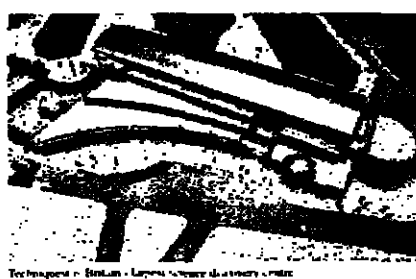
A shipwrecked pirate ship at the Whydah

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at Techniquet, Cardiff
Fly a hot air balloon, launch a hydrogen rocket, play a harp without strings: these are just a few of the 16 interactive exhibits in this spectacular building in the heart of the Cardiff Bay development. You can also fly across the Bay, create your own shadow in colour and get lost in a maze of mirrors in a hands-on environment that is neither museum nor funfair but has the best of both for inquisitive minds of all ages.

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Passport holders: one child goes free with full paying adult
Stuart Street 01222 475 475

Weekdays 9.30am-4.30pm, weekends 10.30am-5pm (last entry 45 mins before closing)
Passport concession runs until March 31



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Old Christchurch Lane Tel: 01202 293 544 (Daily 10am-6pm)

Gloucester: The National Waterways Museum (20% off all entry tickets)
Llanthony Warehouse, Gloucester Docks Tel: 01452 318054 (Daily 10am-5pm)

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THE TIMES

TIMES BOOKS

THURSDAY

Sir Robin Remick on the first free elections in South Africa: Roger Scruton on Conor Cruise O'Brien: Roy Foster on Ireland's military history: plus Alain Jolis's memoirs and Ismail Kadare

The Times/Dillons Bestsellers

HARDBACK				Last No	
				Week	Sales
1	ELIZABETH Sarah Bradford (Hainemann)	£20	8	2	
2	CROSS CHANNEL Julian Barnes (Cape)	£10.99	1	5	
3	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE Daniel Goleman (Bloomsbury)	£16.99	9	4	
4	DELIA SMITH'S WINTER COLLECTION Delia Smith (BBC)	£15.99	2	17	
5	FOODS THAT HARM, FOODS THAT HEAL (Readers Digest)	£25.95	0	1	
6	MAXWELL: THE FINAL VERDICT Tom Bower (HarperCollins)	£16.99	0	1	
7	A WOMAN'S PLACE Edwina Currie (Hodder)	£12.99	0	1	
8	SOPHIE'S WORLD Jostein Gaarder (Phoenix)	£16.99	0	29	
9	THE CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY (OUP)	£14.99	0	5	
10	X-FILES BOOK OF THE UNEXPLAINED Vol 1 Jane Goldman (Simon & Schuster)	£15.99	3	13	
PAPERBACK				Last No	
				Week	Sales
1	THE RAIN-MAKER John Grisham (Arrow)	£5.99	2	2	
2	TRAINSPOTTING Irvine Welsh (Minerva)	£6.99	3	24	
3	THE STATE WE'RE IN Will Hutton (Vintage)	£7.99	5	6	
4	BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE MUSEUM Kate Atkinson (Black Swan)	£5.99	4	5	
5	SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS David Guterson (Bloomsbury)	£5.99	1	21	
6	LADDER OF YEARS Anne Tyler (Vintage)	£5.99	0	1	
7	REGENERATION Pat Barker (Penguin)	£5.99	6	13	
8	ACID HOUSE Irvine Welsh (Vintage)	£5.99	18	13	
9	FREE TO TRADE Michael Ridpath (Mandarin)	£5.99	8	5	
10	THE JUROR George Dawkes Green (Bantam)	£5.99	7	6	
11	SOPHIE'S WORLD GREEK PHILOSOPHERS Jostein Gaarder & Paulette Moller (Phoenix)	£0.60	0	4	
12	THE EYE IN THE DOOR Pat Barker (Penguin)	£5.99	10	12	
13	STAR WARS X-WING: ROGUE SQUADRON BOOK 1 Michael Stackpole (Bantam)	£4.99	0	1	
14	MISS SMILLA'S FEELING FOR SNOW Peter Hoeg (Flamingo)	£5.99	11	53	
15	A GUIDE TO HAPPINESS Epicurus (Penguin)	£0.60	16	5	
16	THE HIGHWAY CODE (HMSO)	£0.99	0	1	
17	A CELESTINE PROPHECY James Redfield (Bantam)	£7.99	12	13	
18	COMPLETE FLAT STOMACH PLAN Rosemary Conley (Arrow)	£4.99	17	2	
19	WRITING HOME Alan Bennett (Faber)	£7.99	9	17	
20	BORROWED TIME Robert Goddard (Corgi)	£5.99	14	6	

Any book from this list can be ordered from Dillons Mail Order Tel: 0171 236 1571 Fax: 0171 589 7420 DILLONS

Dream machine

MR SINGH is a bad-tempered Nairobi garage owner who longs to build his own Rolls-Royce. He is plagued by Kamau, an accident-prone country lad who longs to work for Mr Singh and who points out with beautiful, infuriating logic that a car not made by the "Rolls-Royce maker" cannot be a Rolls-Royce. Their adventures are told by Sylvia Sherry in *Elephants Have Right of Way* (Jonathan Cape, £9.99), with superb illustrations by Quentin Blake.

On a hilarious journey into the bush for some mythical spare parts, both Mr Singh and Kamau unexpectedly realise their dreams. Sherry has captured the magic of a well-knit story, rhythmic and agreeably repetitive, yet challenging the mind and vocabulary of the more confident reader, aged nine or over. Charlotte Voake's *Mr Davies and the Baby* (Walker Books, £8.99) also has a fresh feel. Mr Davies is the kind of horrid little dog that frightens your baby out of its wits by yapping furiously from behind a garden gate. He slips out, chases bikes and terrorises ducks. But Voake's attractive drawings and calligraphic text turn Mr Davies

into a hero and would persuade the cross-stitch mum to feel sympathy for him. For reading to under fives.

My six-year-old complains that I read him too many miserable books about death, so here are some happy picture books for under seven. Jill Ratray's *The King Who Lost His Crown* (Magi, £7.99) and Margaret Greaves's *Tattercoats* (Frances Lincoln, £4.99) are both cheerfully illustrated fairy-tales, unscarred by the self-conscious political correctness that some authors mistake for wit. Ivan Bates has created strong, page-filling illustrations for Sam McBratney's *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* (Walker, £8.99), in which a family of mice learn that home is the safest place, and it is a delight to re-encounter little Ellen and her emotional toy penguin in Clara Vulliamy's *Ellen and Penguin and the New Baby* (Walker, £8.99). With a new baby in the house, Ellen's penguin cannot sleep at night, so Ellen had to bring him downstairs and walk round and round with him, patting his back. Familiar?

SARAH JOHNSON

Torched by the fires of the rising sun

The rape of Nanking by the Japanese in 1937 is the background for a dense and absorbing novel, Frances Donnelly says

THIS is a dark, dense, complicated account of the rise of Japan's military state until its eclipse at the end of the Second World War. This extraordinary novel's centrepiece is the rape of Nanking in 1937, where, having declared war against China, Japan inflicted six weeks of horrendous retribution on Chiang Kai-shek's new Chinese capital.

This gruesome episode is witnessed through the eyes of a group of foreigners trapped in the city, among them the Russian émigré Nadia, Tilik Dayal, an Indian Nationalist, Kenjiro, a liberal Japanese diplomat, and a British journalist called Don Addison.

A CHOICE OF EVILS
By Meira Chand
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £16.99

southeast Asia, then the world. The diplomat, Kenjiro, appalled at the application of these ideals in Nanking, tries to explain the Japanese character to the English journalist. "We are not a vicious people... discipline, gentleness and harmony, these are our strengths. But our people are submissive, used to obey-

ing authority without question. Actions are judged according to their conformity to a set norm." At the other end of the Japanese chain of command but equally uneasy, Akira, a farmer turned soldier, finally deserts, unable to justify what he is doing. Even so, he knows he can never return home as his lack of obedience will have brought disgrace on his family.

If there is one thing each character learns, it is that no matter how vast

the scale of human suffering, each death is important. The Movietone news cameraman, Mariani, rebukes the English journalist for wasting film on an anonymous corpse in the river. They either have to be burnt black like chickens or dead in enormous quantities to qualify for his camera. Then Mariani himself is machine-gunned and dying. "This happened to me because I took no notice of death," he says. "The corpse I told you to ignore, he is important. He is like me, a small man with life and feelings."

Not an easy read, this is nevertheless a marvellously researched and impressively well-written novel.



Anne Tyler: delicately humorous and forgiving

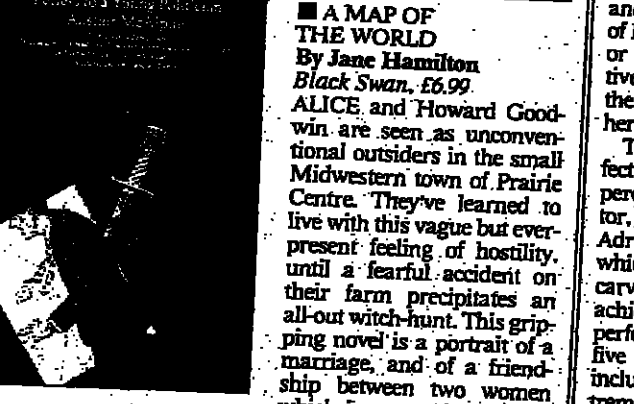
THE LADDER OF YEARS
By Anne Tyler
Vintage, £5.99

DELIA GRINSTEAD, doctor's wife and mother of three, has dwelt all her life in the same rambling house in Baltimore. An unassuming friendly person, she is taken for granted by her uncommunicative husband and increasingly remote adolescent children. She has nursed her father through his terminal illness six months earlier, and is grieving still, though not even her two sisters seem to realise how much.

Delia feels herself growing "weary around the edges", and escapes into romantic novels in which ravens-haired heroines are rescued from lives of drudgery by aristocrats with flashing

eyes. But then on the family's annual vacation to the ocean she abandons her relatives and, wearing only her swimsuit, just keeps walking. Anne Tyler's thirteenth novel traces the consequences of her vertiginous act.

As always Tyler's sympathetically observed characters are ordinary people, who struggle with the wounds of everyday insensitivity, parents watching their children grow up and away, and underpinning all the fearful prospect of old age. At the heart of *The Ladder of Years* stands the Senior City apartment block, each floor representing another step in inevitable decline. It could be depressing, but Tyler's touch, so delicately humorous and forgiving, makes this a deeply enjoyable book.



Alice and Howard Goodwin: unconventional outsiders in the small Midwestern town of Prairie Centre

A MAP OF THE WORLD
By Jane Hamilton
Black Swan, £6.99

ALICE and Howard Goodwin are seen as unconventional outsiders in the small Midwestern town of Prairie Centre. They've learned to live with this vague but ever-present feeling of hostility, until a fearful accident on their farm precipitates an all-out witch-hunt. This gripping novel is a portrait of a marriage, and of a friendship between two women which is put to the severest imaginable test. It is about grief and guilt and loss, and it moves with all the inevitability of a Greek tragedy to a cathartic ending.

WHOM GODS DESTROY
By Ruth Padel
Princeton, £9.95

EDVARD MUNCH'S *The Scream*, which appears on the cover of Padel's book reflects the pervasive ideas and influence of Greek perceptions of madness in modern European art and literature. Padel traces the evolution of the wandering and isolated figure, juxtaposed with a dark landscape, as an image of 20th-century madness which would have been familiar to the Greeks. Through a vast gallery of characters, from Icarus to Lear to Malvolio and Kurtz, Padel reveals the derivation of our perceptions of

With all passion misspent

MINGS KINGDOM
By Nicol Williamson
Hutchinson, £14.99

"OH HAPPINESS, enjoyed but of few! And if I possess, as soon decayed and done! As is the morning's silver, melted dew! Against the golden splendour of the sun."

The author of this novel is an actor of prodigious theatrical talents, while the hero of his narrative is similarly gifted and decorated with more of the obvious rewards than Shakespeare of similar age, and anyway prefers the poetry of Larkin, the life of New York or Paris. Theatricals are selective readers, which is one of the things which make the hero emerge as a bit of a git.

The plot concerns an imperfect love affair which was perceived as perfect. The actor, Rick, falls in lust with Adrienne, who has a bonum which looks as if it were carved out of marble, achieved, possibly, by the perfect alibi of working out five times a week, Sunday included. The sex is initially tremendous, on account of the single fact that she is so good at stretching her legs "till ten to two", although conversation is not brilliant, even when she gets cramp. Hoping that marriage will preserve and encourage this already waning and fluctuating passion, wonderful Big Boy (her description) insists on a marriage which, she keeps secret and, by now, does not want anyway.

Bozo Rick forgets anything he ever knew about there being a tide in the affairs of men, while infantile Adrienne cannot stand conflict and turns instead to manipulation and Momma, who is the misdirected devil of the story. Rick is not a man who loves too much, merely one who loves without judgment. A blind fool — the everyman who thinks his prick has the perspective and vision of a periscope.

And there lies the pity of it; the man of talent and experience proving as glib as any other, the last to know the truth which even his best friend will tell him. There is an awful suspense in watching this self-absorbed creature being taken over, wooing his bride with expensive private pleasures, only to find her dreadful entourage included at every turn, none of them unstoned.

Rick ought to have known that, for anyone but a luvvie, a woman with no other term of endearment than "sweetie" should have been his signal to run like hell. He does not; we watch, wanting to shake him, carried through to the final curtain by grotesque fascination and a lot of anecdotal padding of a highly entertaining kind. The playwright, in this case, is better than the players.

FRANCES HEGARTY



Say it with flowers: Ernst Haas's *Flowers: Cyclamens* Munich, 1981, from *The Art of the Flower*, edited by Hans-Michael Herzog (Edition Stempel, £39.95), a lavish study of the tradition of the floral still life in paintings and photographs from the 17th century to the present day

Helen Stevenson is gripped by a thriller that questions the nature of perception

Blind eye of the beholder

MICHAEL BLOM wakes up in a clinic to discover he has been blinded. He was out shopping when a stray bullet flew through his occipital cortex, causing total and irreversible blindness. "One millimetre lower and you would have died instantaneously."

He is warned that he is likely to suffer from Anton's Syndrome, a condition in which the blind man believes, despite proof to the contrary, that he can see.

It is the visual equivalent of feeling the ground beneath your feet when you have lost both legs or squeezing someone's hand when you have lost an arm. As a physical condition, it is a dubious blessing. As a concept for a novel, it is breathtakingly clever. If hot to handle, for it raises point-blank questions about the

nature of perception, the imagination and narration. Rupert Thomson handles it with a literary intelligence which met almost every requirement I felt I could possibly have of a novel. An illusion no doubt, but one which afforded two apparently contradictory pleasures: the reader could believe blindly in the writer's acrobatic fabrications and at the same time admire

THE INSULT
By Rupert Thomson
Bloomsbury, £10.99

the visible traps and wires by means of which they were simulated.

Michael is convinced that a small metal plate which has been inserted into his brain is allowing Dr Visser, his consultant at the eye hospital, to control him. The twist to

Michael's condition is that he can only see — or is only able to believe that he can see — at night. His affair with Nina, a stripper whom he meets in a bar, is conducted by night. He switches the lights off, he better be able to see her. "It was dark in the bedroom. I watched her lift her blouse over her head."

Back out on the street in the morning, he is blind again.

"Outside it was almost light. The air was so cold, I could feel the shape of my lungs when I breathed in."

Nina disappears and as her lover is the last person to see her alive, Michael is both desperate to find her and a suspect in the eyes of the police. For a blind man, clues have to be verbal. An elderly female relative, whose narrative takes up most of the second half of the book, tells him the story of Nina's birth and reveals the identity of her abductor.

Whether clues of language are any more reliable than visual clues gives pause for thought in this stunningly clever thriller, through which runs a disturbing note of anguished humour that both belies and enhances the rare seriousness of the novel.

Feisty, fruity and dead funny

STEPHANIE PLUM is a fugitive apprehension agent, also known as a bail-bond bounty hunter, which means she tracks down defendants who have not surrendered to their bail and delivers them to justice for a percentage of the bond money. She is one of the funniest, most original and delightful recent entrants into the crime-busting sisterhood.

Apart from her job, she is probably unique in crime fiction in living in Trenton, New Jersey, a city of spectacular nothingness. Her mother's

TWO FOR THE DOUGH
By Janet Evanovich
Hamish Hamilton, £12.50

overriding preoccupation is finding Stephanie a husband, for which purpose a stream of unmitigated jerks, nerds and losers are invited to the perpetually replace family table.

Stephanie, by contrast, has a reluctant lifetime passion, occasionally acted on, for local copper Joe Morelli ever since he did something nice to her behind his father's garage when she was six and he eight.

She also has a grandmother who spends her time viewing dead bodies in funeral parlours to compare the artistic quality of their respective embalming techniques.

In *Two for the Dough*, Evanovich's second Plum novel, the quarry is a recently discharged soldier charged with shooting his former best friend. The search becomes enmeshed with the disappearance of 24 cheap, empty coffins from Granny's favourite undertakers; fingers and other anatomical parts are snatched

from recently deceased bodies and start turning up in unusual places.

Stephanie Plum is a joy: self-deprecating, wise-cracking, overweight, raunchy, accident-prone and ill-suited to her job or to anything else she might do in Trenton, New Jersey. She perseveres with the help of a lot of Woody Allenish one-liners and some ambivalent thoughts about the macho and sexist Morelli.

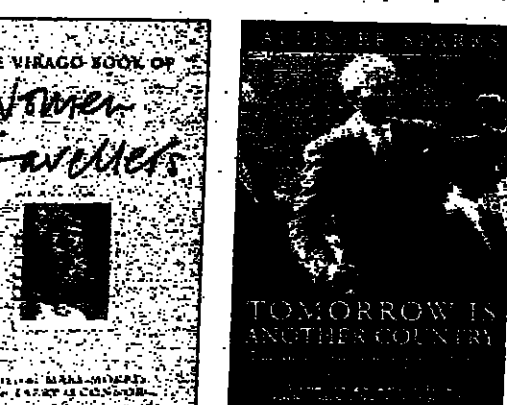
Plum does not take herself or her predicaments too seriously, which, after the often



Evanovich: delightful

self-important and issues-obsessed novels featuring some of America's other female techs, is a great relief.

MARCEL BERLINS



THE VIRAGO BOOK OF WOMEN TRAVELLERS
Edited by Mary Morris with Larry O'Connor
Virago, £8.99

ALTHOUGH this well-constructed book seems to prove that women throughout history have travelled more safely than the young female traveller does today, its eye-opening accounts from 1600 to the present show venturing abroad hasn't always been plain sailing. Isabelle Eberhardt and Sarah Hobson journeyed through Africa and Persia disguised as men; Box-Car Bertha rode freight trains with female hoboes selling sex for dimes. As fascinating as its eccentric social anecdotes and its geographical observations, this is a witty and a poignant collection.

Philippa Ingram, Anthony Howard, Hazel Leslie, Fiona Hook, Amanda Loose, Glyn Brown, Kate Bassett

Run for your life, little boy

THE ONLY good thing to be said about a country where guns are commonplace and armed response belongs to a beat policeman's daily grind is that it makes for cracking thrillers. *Nathan's Run* is proof. John Gilstrap's debut novel is a heartstopper of a chase made for the movies.

A 12-year-old inmate in a juvenile penitentiary has murdered a guard and is on the run. But Nathan is not one more underclass oik out to trash the system and carve out an underworld living. He is a nice, respectable young fellow from an upper-middle-class background who, when he breaks into a home to hide, does the laundry and leaves an apologetic "thank you" note before stealing the BMW.

What gives the plot its mounting tension is the rapport between Nathan and a black Washington DC "rude

NATHAN'S RUN
By John Gilstrap
Little, Brown, £12.99

radio" talk hostess who calls herself "the Bitch". Like a good child of the media age, Nathan feels obliged to join in the live phone-in about himself. On air he claims that everything he has done has been in self-defence because of a plot to kill him.

The only flaw in the plot is that it takes the police so long to discover the motive. Meanwhile, as well as the posess of gun-toting deputies eager to nail this underage cop-killer, a sadistic Mafia hit man has Nathan's name on a contract. With his life in jeopardy and his credibility being judged by a nationwide radio audience, Nathan's calls to the Bitch provide him with his only public platform but also risk giving away his whereabouts.

Gilstrap massages the tension masterfully, slipping easily inside the mind of a 12-year-old, poised on that delicate, difficult threshold between childhood and adolescence. Nathan is almost excited by finding a bra in a drawer while rummaging in one of his hideaways but is still annoyed to find no toys in the house. His best moment is when the one friend he meets on the run gives him a plastic X-men figure as a good-luck charm.

Much of the violence is specifically American, in particular the electrifying climax, but the scenario could easily be transferred to a British context, while the problems of shifting the assumption of blame are universal. The only thing wrong with *Nathan's Run* is that you will find yourself racing through it.

PETER MILLAR

Rushdie wins at last

SALMAN RUSHDIE beat a shortlist which also included Martin Amis, Pat Barker, Louis de Bernières and Minette Walters last week to become Author of the Year in the annual British Book Awards organised by Publishing News.

At the book trade's "Oscar" night, *Delia Smith's Winter Collection* was named Book of the Year.

Other awards included: Publisher: Transworld Marketing Campaign; The Penguin 60s Children's Book: *The Hutchinson Treasury of Children's Literature* (edited by Alison Sage) Illustrated Book: *The River Café Cookbook*.

When is a shop not a shop?

Always on Page 2 and in Weekend Money

NEW ON CD: Lou Reed returns to New York; Brazil's favourite son; Obrecht's mesmerising Mass; Sawallisch goes wild

POP SINGLE

David Sinclair

GABRIELLE
Give Me a Little More Time
Go Beat 550 467***

LITTLE has been heard musically of south-London soul-singer Gabrielle since she won the Best Newcomer award at the Brits in 1994. Give Me a Little More Time will change all that. Written by Gabrielle and her producers, the Boilerhouse Boys, it is a wonderful song steeped in the best traditions of the Motown and Stax sound.

Underpinned by a gently loping beat and a big, brassy horn riff, Gabrielle's performance perfectly captures the



Gabrielle: Stax tradition

compelling emotions of yearning and uncertainty as she stands on the brink of a new relationship. "You tried your best to convince me that you understand/And if I ever need someone to hold on to, you wanted to be the man," she sings, and there is no denying she is tempted by the offer. But still she pleads for a little more time to make up her mind.

The old-fashioned production might have sounded contrived were it not for the strength of the tune and the tremendous conviction of Gabrielle's delivery. In fact, if it were not a brand new song, one would be tempted to say that they simply do not make them like this any more.

POP ALBUM

David Sinclair

LOU REED
Set the Twilight Reeling
Warner Bros 9362-46159***

RETURNING to active duty as if the ill-fated Velvet Underground reunion of 1993 had never happened, Lou Reed picks up the thread of his solo career without missing a beat on *Set the Twilight Reeling*.

Thankfully, he has pulled himself out of the morass of depression and despair which fuelled his last album, *Magic and Loss*. Instead, several

songs revisit the scene of his greatest triumph, the New York album of 1989, although the scathing, world-weary tone of that classic is replaced here by a mood that is generally lighter and more upbeat.

"I'm a New York City man, blink your eyes and I'll be gone," he warns mischievously on *NYC Man*, using his deadpan drawl to sketch only the faintest outline of the tune, while delegating the detailed work to an untypically elaborate arrangement for horn section.

Reed, who will be 54 next month, still has a formidable stock of one-liners — "Nothing lasts forever, not even five minutes," he notes dryly on *Finish Line* — but his greatest strength remains his uncanny ability to conjure a song from the simplest of building blocks. In *HookyWooky*, he paints a rooftop picture of the city — "Looking at the chemical sky/All purple, blue and oranges, some pigeons flying by" — over a childishly simple, chugging riff that allows him a free rein to indulge his poetic ear for words.

The skin-and-bones production of numbers ranging from the jokey rocker *Egg Cream* to the earnest pseudo-soul of *Hang On to Your Emotions* further disguises the craft that goes into Reed's work, and even the more ambitious, sub-Hendrix pyrotechnics of *Rip Tide* tend to sound as if they have been rather casually knocked out.

He will need to make a more conspicuous effort if he is ever to produce another record as outstanding as *New York*, but this is fine for now.

JAZZ

Clive Davis

ANTONIO CARLOS JOBIM
The Man From Ipanema
Verve 525 880 (3 CDs)***

THE easiest way to honour Antonio Carlos Jobim would have been to throw together a selection of his greatest hits. All the obvious titles — *Desafinado*, *Agua de Beber* and *Wave* — find their way onto this memorial to the composer who died unexpectedly just over a year ago.

But just as Jobim created his own soundscape, straddling pop and jazz (and, in miniatures such as *Modinha* and *Soneto da Separação*, the light classics), this anthology also demonstrates how his compositions lent themselves to radically different settings.

So it is that on the third disc — subtitled *Side by Side* — we hear three versions of *Desafinado* back to back — the string-laden, easy-listen-

ing version arranged by Claus Ogerman, the definitive rendition performed with Stan Getz and João Gilberto and a magical encounter with Joe Henderson at Carnegie Hall, recorded months before Jobim's death. *Corcovado*, *Insensatez*, *Vivo Sôhando* and, naturally, *The Girl from*

Ipanema are similarly recycled.

It says much for the subtlety of the apparently uncomplicated melodies that they easily withstand such close scrutiny. And though the instrumentals that make up the second disc — most of them dating from the early 1960s — tend to be a

counterflow of melody — fragmented, repeated, spun into endless sequences, stretched out, contracted and positively saturating all the voice parts. Rhythmic stability and melodic vitality co-exist in hypnotic balance and are realised superbly in the firm yet supple textures of the Talis Scholars' four tenors, two basses and two sopranos, artfully balanced and paced by Peter Phillips.

HEINRICH SCHÜTZ
Geistliche Chormusik
Collegium Vocale/
Herreweghe
Harmonia Mundi
HMC 90153***

POVERTY and famine were rife and the Dresden court chapel was reduced to rubble. As German musicians, artists and writers searched for their response in the last year of the Thirty Years War, Heinrich Schütz composed a set of "small and simple works" setting extracts from Luther's Biblical texts in the simple, declamatory style he had learnt from Gabrieli in Venice. The *Kleine geistliche Konzerte* of 1636-39 remain some of the most spare and eloquent examples of the sacred vocal music of that time, and half a dozen of them are dropped, jewel-like, into this recording of Schütz's later motets from the *Geistliche Chormusik*.

So, in among the light-filled contrapuntal singing of the Collegium Vocale appears a tender, imprecatory duet, *Create in me a clean heart*, sung by soprano Agnès Mellon and tenor Mark Padmore; and the drowsy descent of sleep creeps through the voices of Padmore and bass Peter Kooy. There is no dearth of recordings of both these collections, but few offer such eloquent selection and performance as this one.

OPERA
John Higgins

RUTH ANN SWENSON
Coloratura Arias from the Golden Age
London Philharmonic
Orchestra/Rescigno
EMI CDC 7 54822***

RUTH ANN SWENSON's recital disc is issued to coincide with her debut at Covent Garden on Monday in the title role of *Semele*. But there is no Handel here. EMI's Golden

Age is strictly 19th century and several of the numbers are those Joan Sutherland recorded 35 years ago under the title *The Art of the Prima Donna*, a set which spurred her international reputation.

Swenson's soprano is already heavier than Sutherland's was then, and it shows in a number such as Juliet's *Waltz Song* from Gounod's *Treatment of the Lovers of Verona*. There is a lack of girlish dazzle. But Swenson has first-class technique and shares with Sutherland the ability to end a vocal fireworks display with an extra large rocket. Try the Donizetti numbers from *Lucia* and *Linda di Chamounix*.

The Bellini arias, from *Puritani* and *Sonnambula*, are accomplished but chill. Elvira's plea for hope, or falling that death, needs more emotion, although the following cabaleta is full of energy.

GRAZIELLA SCIUTTI
The Early Years
Various orchestras
Philips 442 750-2***

BOTH the Bellini numbers on the Swenson disc are also on the Philips compilation of

recordings made by Graziella Scitti in her late twenties. Scitti's problem was that at the very same time Callas was beginning to give an entirely new dimension to Bellini. By comparison she sounds superficial.

She was much happier with sparker ladies who did not go mad or start sleepwalking at the first setback. Scitti was a 'Glydebourne pet' in the 1950s mainly for her Mozart performances and for Cost in particular. Despina's two arias are here, very fresh and sharply pointed. So is Zerlina, with George London as a gruff Giovanni. Scitti is not up to Semiramide's grand *Bel raggio*, but when she turns from Rossini to Donizetti, she shows what a vivacious and incisive interpreter she was.

A totally different side is shown in songs by Fauré, Debussy and Ravel. Philips apologises for the sound quality here. It would have done better to have begged pardon for the indifferent background article which manages to comment on a number of arias not included on the disc.

ORCHESTRAL
Barry Millington

STOKOWSKI
TRANSCRIPTIONS
Philadelphia Orchestra/
Sawallisch
EMI CDC 5 55592 2***

STOKOWSKI'S orchestral transcriptions have about as much to do with their originals as does, say, *Kiss me, Kate* with *The Taming of the Shrew*. But that is not to deny that they are great fun.

César Franck's *Panis Angelicus* seems more saccharine than ever, while Chopin's modest *Prelude in E Minor* is injected with enough pathos to fill a Puccini opera. Debussy's *Clair de lune* is all rippling harps and Mantovani strings, but *La cathédrale engloutie* has a more sensational sound picture than you would ever have thought possible under water.

The Bach arrangements (*Sheep may safely graze*, *Wachet auf und Ein feste Burg*) have little perceptible connection with the Kantor of Leipzig, but the music (whoever's it is) sounds absolutely ravishing dressed in Stokowski's opulent garb.

but what about Alastair Sim's eccentric snooper, the cook, the butler, or even John Mills's RAF chappie, who parachuted into the loch? Anthony Asquith's version of a 1940 stage success follows the Hitchcock formula but adds a ragged, zany charm all of its own.

DIE HARD WITH A VENGEANCE
Buena Vista, 15, 1995

DETECTIVE Bruce Willis has another bad day. First the Bonwit Teller department store blows up. Then the battle rages all round New York, from Harlem to Wall Street, in tunnels, banks, subways and primary schools. The man responsible is Jeremy Irons, giving a pantomime performance as a terror-

ist prankster. Samuel L. Jackson exerts stronger appeal as a Harlem shopkeeper who becomes Willis's sidekick, though their bantering scenes belong in a different film. Plenty of action but no dramatic focus. Available to rent.

A SIMPLE TWIST OF FATE
Buena Vista, PG, 1994

WRITER-producer-star Steve Martin takes the plot of *Silas Marner* and weaves it into an ambitious dramatic comedy about babies lost and found and a miser's redemption. The mix does not really work, but odd scenes are endearing, and in his first American venture, British director Gillies Mackinnon acquires himself well. With Gabriel Byrne and Catherine O'Hara. Available to rent.

GEOFF BROWN

NEW ON VIDEO: Boorman lost in the jungle; digital stew from the delicatessen; Steve Martin battles fate



On the run: John Boorman's jungle adventure *Beyond Rangoon*, starring Patricia Arquette, is set against the background of the pro-democracy struggle in Burma

BEYOND RANGOON

Columbia TriStar, 12, 1995

JOHN BOORMAN likes pitting outsiders against raw nature, but Patricia Arquette's trek through the Burmese jungle brings no special magic or touch of myth. She is out of her depth as an American tourist stirred by the pro-democracy movement with a dissident professor. The heat of the chase, by raft and by truck, generates some excitement but you expect more from Boorman. Available to rent.

THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN

Entertainment, 15, 1995

JEUNET and Caro, the *Delicatessen* duo, return with a far bigger

budget and an indigestible fantasy crammed with digital effects. If you hack a path through the trickery, you may find a plot: it hinges on the attempt by Ron Perlman's circus strongman to rescue a child kidnapped for the pleasure of an evil genius who lives on an oil rig. But the story never stirs emotions or drives the film forward; you must sink or swim with the bizarre images, set in a landscape that blends Dickens, Jules Verne and David Lynch. Available to rent.

COTTAGE TO LET

Rank Collection, U, 1991

SO WHO is the Nazi agent lurking on Leslie Banks's Scottish estate? Unlikely to be the Cockney evacuee played by 16-year-old George Cole,

but what about Alastair Sim's eccentric snooper, the cook, the butler, or even John Mills's RAF chappie, who parachuted into the loch? Anthony Asquith's version of a 1940 stage success follows the Hitchcock formula but adds a ragged, zany charm all of its own.

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ist prankster. Samuel L. Jackson exerts stronger appeal as a Harlem shopkeeper who becomes Willis's sidekick, though their bantering scenes belong in a different film. Plenty of action but no dramatic focus. Available to rent.

FOREVER ENGLAND

Rank Collection, PG, 1995

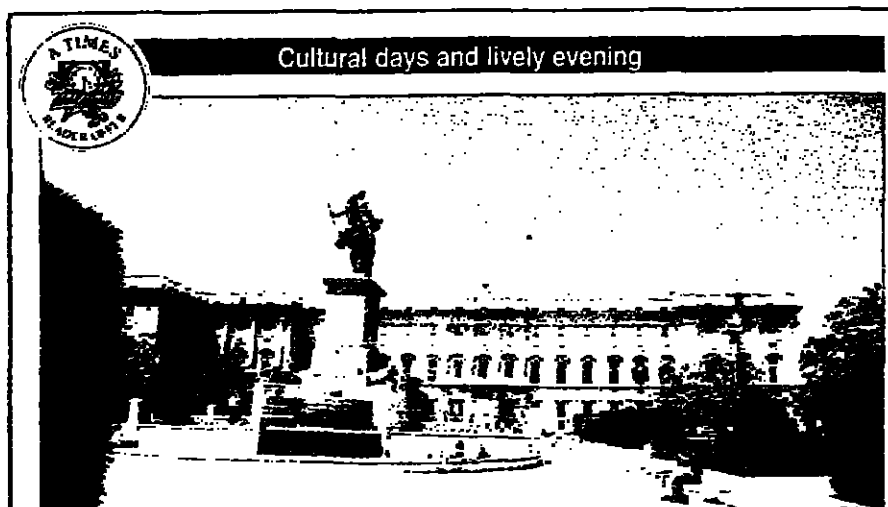
JOHN MILLS found his first major film role as the sailor lad born out of wedlock because his parents came from different classes. But breeding will out, especially when you are fighting the Hun in the First World War. Dated but stirring stuff, based on C. S. Forester's novel *Brown on Resolution*; the studio discounted that title because it sounded too much like a textbook. Location work

injects a touch of realism; and the Admiralty thought well enough of the project to lend the film-makers real battleships and 270 sailors.

A SIMPLE TWIST OF FATE
Buena Vista, PG, 1994

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Jobim: own soundscape

little bland, the vocal numbers on the opening disc are pure treasure trove. While everyone will be familiar with Astrud Gilberto's impersonal yet oddly effective delivery, it is Elis Regina's more supple voice that sounds more and more like the perfect medium, the true voice of Brazil.

CHORAL

Hilary Finch

JACOB OBRECHT

Missa Maria Zart

Tallis Scholars/Philips

Gimell CDGIM 032***

IF YOU have 70 minutes this weekend, prepare to put them aside to do nothing but listen, without distraction, to one of the longest, most mesmerising settings of the Mass ever written. Jacob Obrecht worked as a composer in Flanders in the last years of the 15th century. Then, on his way to the court in Ferrara (where, within a matter of weeks, he was to die of the plague), he wrote this all-absorbing Mass, based on a Tyrolean hymn melody. *Tenard Mary, rose without thorn*. It is thought to be his swansong, and the Tallis Scholars honour both Obrecht's memory and the catalogue with this fine recording. To enter Obrecht's sound world is to immerse yourself in a unique flow and



Sawallisch: histrionics

the infamous Toccata and Fugue in D Minor is the most impressively overblown of the lot. The Philadelphia Orchestra (Stokowski's own), now under Wolfgang Sawallisch — normally a man of impeccable taste and discretion — revels in these vulgar, lurid histrionics as to the manner born.

BRUCKNER

Symphony No 1 in C Minor

Chicago Symphony

Orchestra/Solti

Decca 448 898-2***

BRUCKNER'S Symphony No 1 opens not with the mysterious string tremolos familiar from his later works in the genre but with a marching tune more akin to Mahler. In the mid-1860s, Mahler's symphonies were unwritten, and Beethoven's Ninth (the source of the tremolos) was not heard by Bruckner until 1866. The First Symphony was by that time complete and the chief influence, if any, would have to be Wagner, in particular *Tristan*, which Bruckner had just heard.

Certain gestures of vintage Bruckner are foreshadowed here — the noble, arching melody of the Adagio, the athletic Scherzo — and it is of more than academic interest to hear the piece in as committed a reading as this by Solti and the Chicago Symphony.

The total timing is not given on the back of the disc, presumably in the hope that we would not realise that at less than 47 minutes it is somewhat short measure. The version used is the original Linz one of 1865-66 — a vital decision, as Bruckner's later tinkering was misconceived.

*** Worth hearing
*** Worth considering
*** Worth buying

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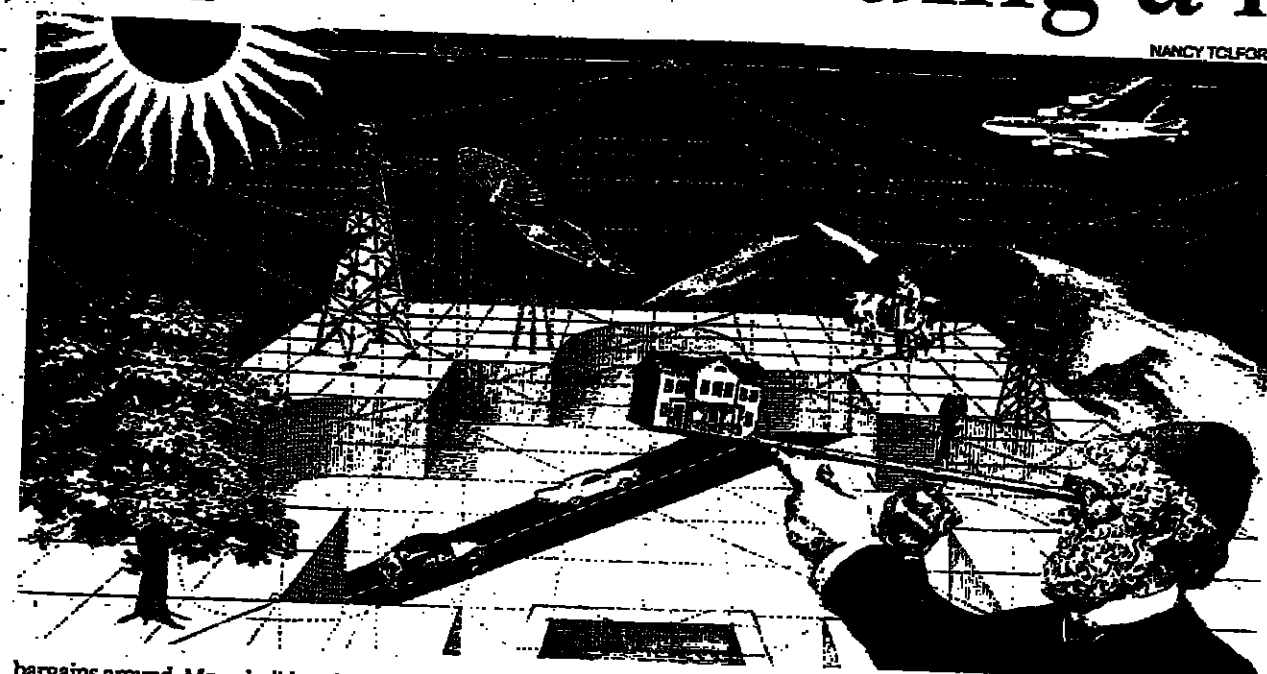
Perfect plot for building a house

Part one: how to check out a suitable site and then buy the land

Forget creaking, draughty Georgian piles that cost a mint to run. Stop hunting for that perfect neo-modern house when you find one it probably won't be where you want it and there will be a dozen almost the same on the executive estate. Before the design plans of your dreams disappear for ever under the dust and rubble of a full-scale conversion of a nondescript prewar semi, consider doing what the diggers down-under do — build a house from scratch yourself.

A good size three-bedroom family house can be built for as little as £75,000, including materials and labour. If you are prepared to organise the construction work yourself, the architect's fee (between 8 and 15 per cent of the building costs), buying the land and landscaping will be extra.

First, you need land, preferably with outline planning consent. As site values can represent 50 or 60 per cent of a property's completed costs in some parts of the southeast, this will take a large chunk of your budget, but there are



NANCY TOLFORE

bargains around. Many builders, unable to wait until the housing market improves, are cutting their losses by selling plots. Finding the right plot, however, is not easy. There are plenty on offer but you will not find many For Sale boards. The best source of sites are local builders; farmers also sometimes have plots.

Many local authorities have small infill sites between existing properties, or redundant school playing fields with outline planning consent.

Keep an open mind; the best site might not be the most obvious. Disused industrial land can make an ideal build-

ing plot, but ensure the land is not contaminated by having a soil test done. Another approach is to find a dilapidated house on a good-sized plot, demolish it and rebuild.

Someone who owns a large garden might be prepared to sell a slice, particularly if it has good access and you pay cash. If you want to approach an owner direct, your best information source is the local Land Registry, now required by law to disclose the ownership of any registered title for a fee.

There are also commercial land-finding companies. Landbank Services provides

lists of estate agents, land agents, local authorities and auctioneers.

The price of a plot is determined by its size, location, availability of planning consent and how much of the land can be built on. Buying a site without approval for development means you risk being left with a worthless plot if planning permission is subsequently refused.

Sites with outline planning permission will often be limited by conditions that restrict building to a minimum. Others have existing legal covenants that prohibit construction. There may be a public

footpath running through it, inadequate access, or plans for a new road or development nearby. Your solicitor should check this.

Outline consent usually lapses after three years and may not be renewed, so check when it was granted with the local planning department. Land described as a "building plot" is not always suitable. If ground conditions are poor, special foundations will be needed. A structural engineer can advise you. Make sure essential services (mains water, drainage, gas and electricity) are readily available, or the cost of their provision could be prohibitive. A site with a tree preservation order could pose problems. You also need to take account of large trees close to the house when putting in foundations.

If you are buying in a Conservation Area, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or a National Park, the house design may be restricted; and the planners may require you to use expensive traditional materials, such as local stone or slate.

The cheapest areas for building plots are the Scottish

Highlands and parts of rural Wales; the most expensive, apart from central London, is the Surrey stockbroker belt, where prices are at least five times higher than Scotland. Landbank Services has a third-of-an-acre plot at Kinlochewe, near Loch Maree in Scotland, for £10,000, with outline planning consent for a single property.

Or you could buy a quarter-acre plot with essential services in Woodcote Park, Purley, Surrey, for £180,000 with consent for a chalet bungalow.

In south Devon, a fifth of an acre at Thurlestone, near the sea and an 18-hole golf course, costs £50,000 through Marchand Pettit. It has outline consent for a three-bedroom bungalow and essential services.

A half-an-acre plot at Kingswear, south Devon, is available for £100,000 through Strutt & Parker. It occupies an elevated position overlooking the River Dart with outline consent for a four-bedroom house with an indoor pool.

On an even larger scale, Knight Frank is selling a 35-acre site in the Scottish borders, near St Boswells, for £35,000 with three new fish ponds and outline consent for a farmhouse and holiday chalets.

Moving upmarket, there are 14 acres in the New Forest near Pritham for £300,000 through Savills, with consent for a two-storey, four-bedroom, three-bathroom house. Savills' Norwich office is asking £30,000 for a single plot (0.14 acres) in the village of Swanton Novers in Norfolk, which has permission for a four-bedroom house and garage.

CHERYL TAYLOR

Landbank Services, PO Box 2035, Reading, Berkshire RG1 2JH 018002; Marchand Pettit 01548 357585; Strutt & Parker 01392 215631; Knight Frank 0131-225 8171; Savills 01722 320422 or 01603 612211.

Next week: instructing an architect and building the house

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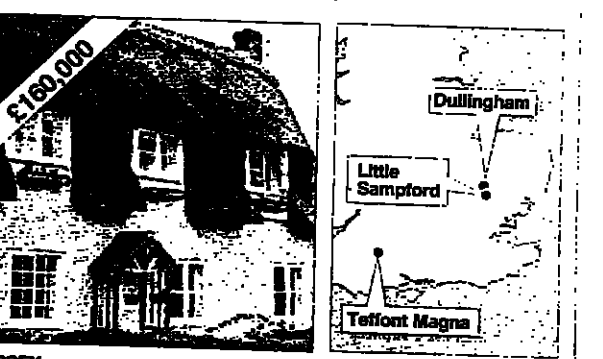
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SUFFOLK
Napier House, Dullingham, near Newmarket. Grade II listed, early 18th-century village house in a third of an acre of well-stocked gardens. Four bedrooms, three reception rooms, conservatory, kitchen/breakfast room, utility and cloakroom. Detached six-room annexe with ensuite and spa room. Garage. About £300,000 (Richells, 01284 767398).



WILTSHIRE
Clarence Cottage, Telford Magna. Picturesque cottage in lawned gardens with a detached barn, in a village conservation area on the edge of the Naadler valley. Five bedrooms, three bathrooms (two en suite), three reception rooms, study, kitchen/breakfast room and utility. About £248,000 (Humberts' 01722 324422).



ESSEX
Mill Cottage, Little Sampford. Grade II listed, 18th-century timber-framed cottage with garden and country views. Four bedrooms, two bathrooms, (one en suite), two reception rooms, garden room, fitted kitchen, utility and cloakroom. Garage/workshop. About £160,000 (Trembath Welch, 01371 672117).

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Between Dorking and Horsham on the A24, a distinctive, Grade II listed house by Sir Edwin Lutyens.
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Price Guide: £370,000
HEAD OFFICE: 0171-493 4106

Superyachts on the crest of a wave

Sailing

Just for a moment, on a bitterly cold day in the Solent, there was a breath of the warm Caribbean. In a light, north-westerly wind, *Yanneke Too* glided along, heeling gently as her acres of sail caught the breeze and the sun cast a golden shadow across her sweeping expanse of teak deck.

It was easy to imagine this most elegant of yachts on a turquoise sea under a really warm sun — the ultimate cruising machine in the ultimate cruising ground.

Charlie Dwyer, the professional skipper from Newport, Rhode Island, who heads a full-time crew of five on this latest "superyacht" from a British yard, took his gloved hands off the wheel to bang some heat back into them.

"I've been on a few of them and this one is absolutely beautiful," he said. On the foredeck, Mike Hallagher, a crew member, seemed to be playing with the remote control of a model aeroplane. But he was actually using a handheld keyboard to unfurl one of the boat's huge mainsails.

Yanneke Too's formal launch this month is the latest evidence of the resurgence in demand for superyachts at the top end of the luxury cruising market. Since the mid-1980s there has been a threefold increase in the global production of boats more than 100ft long, reflecting a renewed enthusiasm among the super-rich for sailing in style. The recession has not touched everyone.

Although more than twice as many of the new superyachts are motor-driven as opposed to sail-powered, the sailing market is looking healthy, with 147 new boats completed between 1985 and 1994, mainly in America, Italy, Holland, Germany and Australia. *Yanneke Too* is the product of one of Britain's leading manufacturers in this sector, Camper & Nicholson, which has built yachts from its yard in Portsmouth Harbour since 1782. It produced magnificent America's Cup and "J" class racers in the 1920s and

impressive bill on the two booms — custom-built in New Zealand — which for VAT alone came to £26,000.

The yacht has a clean, sleek and timeless look. The interior is stunning. She is fitted out for 12 people, six crew forward and six guests aft, including the owner in a double state room with an adjoining study and ensuite bathroom. There is a tremendous feeling of space throughout the boat, which is finished in cherry wood with burr maple inlays in the panelling in the owner's areas.

Bill Dixon has achieved his brief of creating an elegant feel.

"This boat should feel very homely," he said as we reclined in the lower saloon, made up of three sofas arranged on one side and a dining area on the other, exploiting the 26ft width of the boat to the full. The entertainment console was 6ft tall. The TV arose magically from the sideboard at the flick of yet another remote keypad.

"Although she's large, she is not intimidating," said Dixon. "She's something you feel quite comfortable with."

The galley resembled a small kitchen you might find in a well-furnished flat and was filled with the latest power-hungry cooking technology. Sarah Thomson, *Yanneke Too's* full-time stewardess, was effusive about the boat's safety and comfort. During a recent trial in 25 knots of wind she had spent the day down below doing the ironing.

Among other notable features are the computer controlled lighting in all areas, an extensive alarm system which can tell the crew if a porthole or hatch has been left open, the gold-plated taps in the bathrooms, and five lavatories.

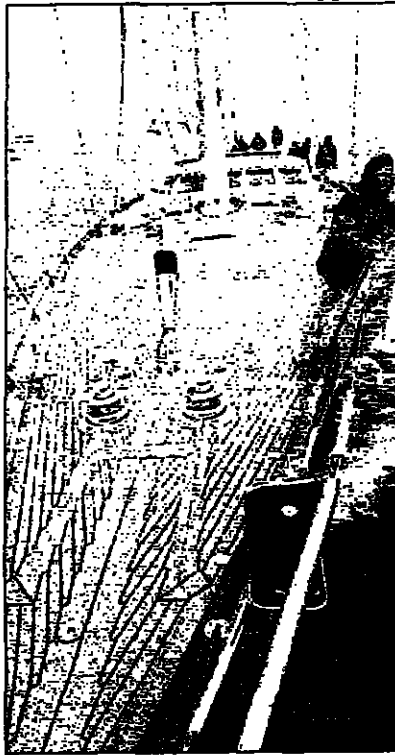
Nick Maris, the owner and chairman of Camper & Nicholson, summed up the philosophy behind superyachts like *Yanneke Too*.

"It's all about lifestyle," he said. "For people who have the money, this boat should make a bigger difference to their lifestyle than any other possession apart from their home. It's a pampering environment — another plane of hedonism and comfort."

And as if this superyacht had not displayed enough of its desirable qualities, he pointed out three more modest selling points: "A lot of these guys are hard-pressed executives. This saves their heart, their marriage and their kids."

EDWARD GORMAN

Next week: Sailing up the Thames to Tower Bridge



The VAT bill on *Yanneke Too's* two booms alone was £26,000

Yanneke Too fact file

Overall length: 116ft 6in (89ft 4in on the waterline).
Width: 26ft.
Draft: 9ft 6in.
Displacement: 128 tonnes.
Engine: 470 horsepower converted Japanese digger.
Upwind sail area: a massive 5,837sq ft on a Schooner rig.
Twin masts of carbon fibre; the hull has a cedar wood core with laminates of GFRP and Kevlar for extra strength.

VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE HISTORIC PROPERTY



Chartwell, Kent, was the family home of Sir Winston Churchill from 1922

The Times/NPI National Heritage Awards

Since the launch of the National Heritage Awards last autumn, readers of *The Times* have nominated more than 160 properties which they consider to be the best in the British Isles.

The awards, in association with pensions specialist NPI, now moves onto the voting stage and today we publish a voting form, right, containing the 16 short-listed finalists. You can also vote for *The Times* Family Award, by selecting a property you consider makes a special effort to entertain and inform adults and children.

The winning property will be presented with a crystal trophy by Lord Inglewood, under secretary of state at the Department of National Heritage, at a gala reception in London in April. By registering your vote, you will automatically be entered into a prize draw for the chance to attend the ceremony with a guest.

Coffee table books illustrating historic buildings, worth £20 each, will go to 20 runners-up.

Post the voting form to:
The Times/NPI National Heritage Awards, Spero Communications, Grampian House, Meridian Gate, Marsh Wall, London E14 9XT. Closing date is Saturday, March 2, 1996.



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I would like to vote for the following properties. Please mark 1, 2 and 3 in the spaces provided. 1 being the overall winner, 2 the runner-up and 3 third place.

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Blickling Hall	Forde Abbey
Bolsover Castle	Fountains Abbey
Brookland Hall	Hampton Court
Chartwell	Harewood House
Chatsworth	Hever Castle
Cotehele	Sickley Castle
Cutbush Castle	Warwick Castle

The Times Family Award

Please tick one only

Bolsover Castle	Dover Castle
Brookland Hall	Fountains Abbey
Chatsworth	Warwick Castle

Jill Parkin reports on one of the long-term problems of food biotechnology



Genetic engineering might mean herbicide-resistant wheat but the result could be a chemical cocktail with an unknown price. Below: pernicious black grass

Chips and genes on the menu

They are sitting ready for us on the laboratory shelf — potatoes, sugar beet and oilseed rape, none quite as nature intended. Scientists have taken a gene from here, put a gene in there, and produced crops which are resistant to some herbicides. Other crops, even wheat, are only a test-tube or two away.

The basic idea sounds good. It means that farmers can spray a whole field, crop and weeds, with a simple and environmentally safe weedkiller, saving time and money.

But once licences are granted to do this, the short-term benefits could soon give way to long-term problems. Put simply, crops and weeds tend to interbreed, and if herbicide resistance is passed on to the weeds, the simple and safe weedkiller becomes redundant. Something stronger will be needed.

Bill Stirling, the deputy director of British Organic Farmers, says: "Genetic tampering is like taking the stopper out of a pantomime bottle: it releases a genie of uncertain temper and unknown power."

"Producing herbicide-tolerant crops means using more non-renewable resources to produce more chemicals for deliberate introduction into the environment. By interfering with nature we are storing up a lot of long-term problems for short-term gain."

This short-term gain horrifies Vicki Hird, of the Sustainable Agriculture Food and Environment Alliance (SAFE), which represents 33 groups with farming, environmental, animal welfare and education interests. "Why do we need it?" she asks.

One of the answers is in a report by the biotechnology working party of the National Farmers' Union. Genetically modified potatoes would have improved flavour, mash texture and

evenness of fry colour, it says. Those of green persuasion might think we could get by without such attributes.

"In the long term, it will increase the level of herbicides used," Ms Hird says. "The big beneficiaries are the biotech companies — the same companies which produce the herbicide-resistant crops and the herbicides. This means that the farmer gets the whole package. He is controlled by the companies."

Herbicide-resistant crops could be sprayed with products that are hardly used on crops at the moment because they are so basic and strong that they kill anything green. Glyphosate ammonium and glyphosate, sold as Basta and Round-Up, are environmentally "fairly benign," says Clare Gosling, the food science adviser to the NFU. They're general, not specific. They have low toxicity, don't stay around long and bio-degrade into a non-harmful compound.

"But it would be a real problem if more than one tolerance occurred. You would then have to use a chemical cocktail to kill off the weeds."

But resistance can occur naturally, she says. As the weeds fight to survive, it's the ones with some natural resistance which multiply. It's a problem wheat farmers already have, particularly with the pernicious black grass, a weed whose black "rats' tails" stand out dramatically against the crop. Naturally occurring herbicide-resistant weeds in wheat fields are, literally, a growing problem.

Another problem occurs when you use a field for a herbicide-resistant crop and then reuse it for another crop the next year. Remnants of last year's crop become weeds, very tough ones.

At the moment, the genie is still in the bottle. None of the products has yet been commercially licensed in Britain, though the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) says that some limited licences have been granted for testing. The whole issue, a MAFF spokesman says, is with the European Commission.

It would be wrong to portray the farmers as nothing but environmental

baddies, poised with a jar of chemical nasties, their eyes on bigger profit margins. Although the report by the NFU biotechnology working party considers herbicide-tolerant weeds "a low risk", the NFU says it is worried for the long term and does not want the responsibility to be left to farmers.

The organisation would like to see a government policy and "clarification of liability for any environmental harm resulting from release to the environment of genetically modified organisms".

Mr Stirling would prefer more cash to be spent on producing natural crops: cash in the shape of a big boost to the organic aid scheme the Government introduced in 1994.

"Chemically produced food is far more expensive than most people realise," he says. "When you buy organic apples and turnips you're paying all the costs involved, but when you buy chemically produced fruit and vegetables you are not paying anything towards clearing up after those apples and turnips which have made a chemical mess."

DERWENT M

Beauties that beat the fashion cull

IN THE 1850s there was a fashion among women for "grebe, furs" made of the beautiful plumage of the great crested grebe. The birds were massacred in large numbers and by the end of the decade there were thought to be only 32 pairs left in Britain.

Bird protection was then in its infancy but determined legislation saved the species. By the 1930s the population was back to a thousand or so pairs, assisted by a spread of the birds westward across Europe. Since then, with an increase of suitable waters caused by the flooding of old gravel pits, it has increased to about 5,000 pairs.

You can find at least one pair on most large waters in the south of England and the Midlands, and here and there in other parts of the country. They are conspicuous in mid-February: back in summer plumage, with black ear tufts and a silky chestnut ruff tipped with black high on their

slender necks. When they look directly at you they have an evil appearance, with their threatening, sharp-pointed bill and their black ear tufts meeting in front like a devil mask.

On the back, they are black tinged with brown. Underneath they are pure white. When they roll over to preen they look like a bundle of silvery white feathers floating on the water.

They are now forming into pairs and the courting display. They swim up and face each other and shake their heads vigorously, with the ear tufts lifted and the brilliant ruff spread out.

On a windy February day, these adornments are blown about and their heads look like woolly mops. While they are displaying, they make curious clicking sounds, and between bouts of head-shaking they have sessions of vigorous, formalised preen-

Feather report



The great crested grebe

ing. The grebes keep to large lakes because they need a long runway to get into the air. In fact, they fly about very little. When they are alarmed they disappear under the water and come up further away. They also feed underwater, swimming with the use of

their large, lobed feet. Nobody understands why they have these lobes, rather than webbed feet like ducks. Lobed feet are usually found in birds, such as coots, that both swim and walk a good deal. Grebes never walk, except to take a step or two across their floating nests.

THE NESTS are a heap of reeds and other vegetation and, though they float, they are generally attached to underwater plants. At the edge of a slow-flowing river you can sometimes find one attached to the overhanging twigs of a willow tree on the bank. The nests are always vulnerable to flooding.

The four or five eggs in a clutch are white but soon get stained from the damp vegetation with which the incubating bird covers them when it leaves the nest for a break.

The birds are usually said to nest from March to August but I have found them breed-

ing both earlier and later. Two years ago I found a bird sitting on eggs at the beginning of February, and last year I was astonished to see one with a small chick in early January.

This last bird was probably a late autumn nester, still in the previous summer's breeding plumage, rather than an early spring nester. When I saw the chick, was also dramatic: it was sitting on its parent's back. Grebes sometimes carry their chicks like this to protect them from pike, who, when it comes to grebes, are as heartless as fashionable women seem to have been 150 years ago.

DERWENT M

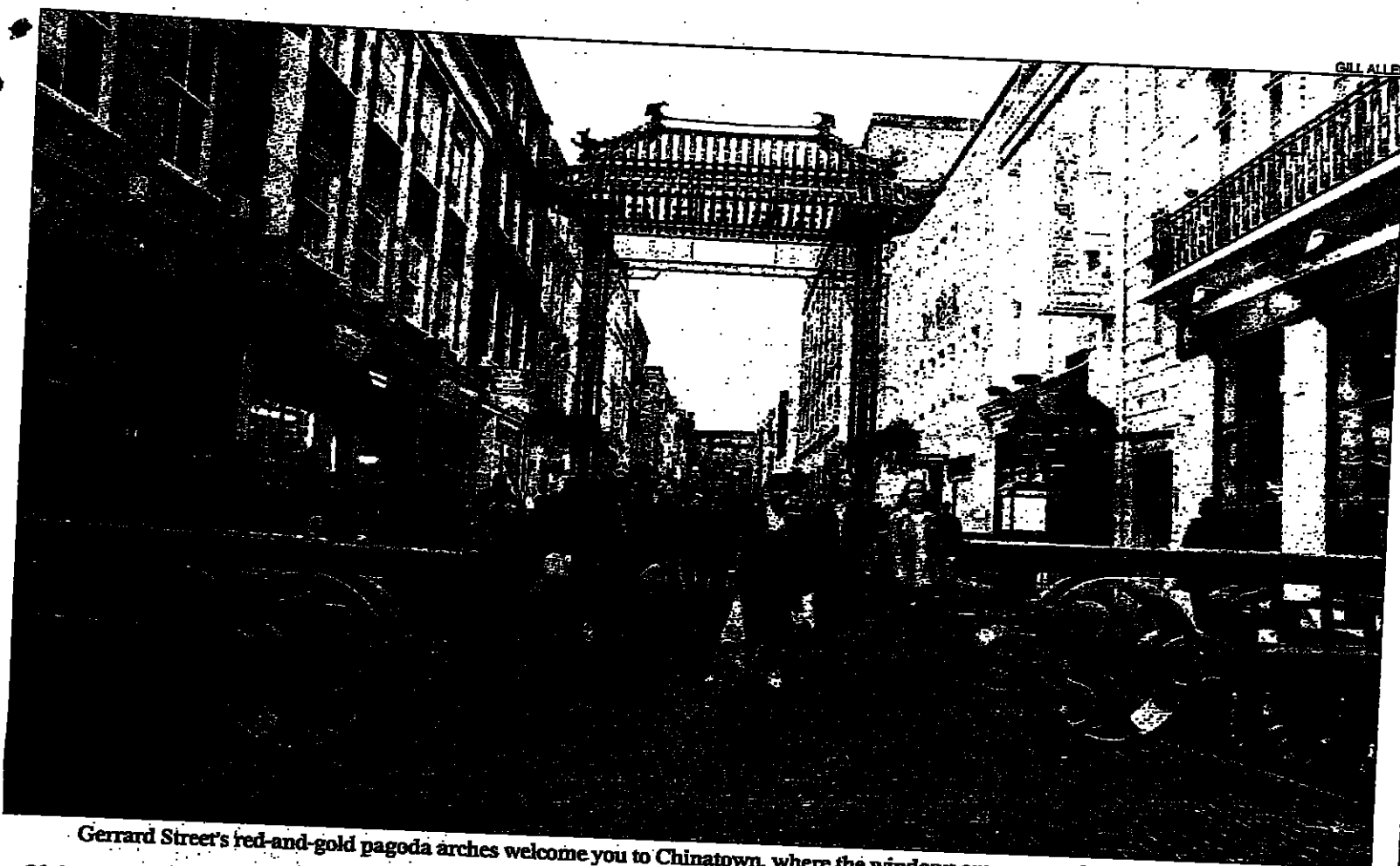
What's about: Birds — watch out for rooks rebuilding nests. Twitches — white-bellied diver at Staithes Harbour, North Yorkshire; male black-throated thrush at Walsingham, Norfolk. Details from Birdline, 0800 700222. Calls cost 40p a minute plus 50p a minute at all other times.

Happy

SHOPPING

Happy new

year for Soho



Gerrard Street's red-and-gold pagoda arches welcome you to Chinatown, where the windows are crammed with varnished ducks

Chinatown, speciality shops, a market and bustling streets — Soho has it all

London's Chinatown will come spectacularly alive during next week's Chinese New Year — adding even more bustle and colour to Soho, where it is situated.

Soho is one of the friendliest and most misunderstood places in London: its small area of sleaze often grabbing the biggest headlines.

Chinatown is separated from the rest of Soho by Shaftesbury Avenue, but there is no mistaking it when you arrive: pagoda-like arches span each end of Gerrard Street, the lamp-posts and litter bins are red and gold, and huge, stone lion-dogs snarl down at you. What the Chinese think of the Lego-like telephone boxes is anyone's guess. Window after window in Gerrard Street is crammed with glowing racks of varnished ducks. There are dozens of Chinese restaurants here, but the best value is China China, an unglamorous and brightly lit place (be prepared to share a table) where two people can fill themselves with delicious Cantonese food for about £10 (two dishes plus rice and tea). The Lido restaurant is also worth a visit: superb meals are served from 11.30am until 4.30am. Everything you need for home Chinese cooking is available from the large and enticing supermarket Loom Fung.

Everywhere you hear the distinctive twang of Chinese pop music, available from



Reverse-dial clock at Anything Left Handed. Right: heady aromas lure shoppers into the Algerian Coffee Stores



Sound of China, which has thousands of Chinese CDs from £10.

Leaving Chinatown via Wardour Street, you arrive at Brewer Street. About halfway down is Anything Left Handed, a tiny shop selling not only the expected — scissors (still its best-selling item at £5.95), tin-openers (£13.95), corkscrews (£14.95) and serrated knives (£7.95-£35.95) — but also such items as a clock with all the numerals in reverse (£19.95), a boomerang (£12.95) and a scythe (£56.95). The shop runs the Left-Handers Club — and recently persuaded Lloyds Bank to introduce a back-to-front cheque book.

Also in Brewer Street is the Vintage Magazine Company — an addictive shop whose

lower floor is devoted to back issues (sometimes ancient) of every collectable publication from *Beano* (£1-£150 each) to *Playboy* (from £8). Original film posters range from £2 to around £500 (*The Great Escape* is £125). Upstairs is the domain of the cult still photographs £3, repro posters (around £8) and T-shirts (£10) featuring such idols as Kojak, Frankie Howard, Charlie's Angels, Starkey and Hutch. They also have great 10in models of the Beatles (£130).

Just off Brewer Street (beyond Raymond's Revue Bar) is Berwick Street market, open daily except Sunday, selling mainly fruit, veg and flowers. Go there in the late afternoon for bargains — £1 for six avocados. Here too is the shop Simply Sausages. The best seller in a range of 35 is Heaps No 1 (Mr Heap is the proprietor, and here is a classic 90-per-cent-meat pork banger at £2.99 a pound); for Burns Night they sold 100lb of haggis (not to the same person).

Camisa and Son in Old Compton Street is a shoeboxed, traditional Italian deli (always packed and with a long queue outside) offering, among many other delicacies, the finest Parmesan cheese cut from huge trunks at only £6.99 a pound.

What about a drink? Gerry's Club in Dean Street, now 40 years old, is a haven for actors, writers and musicians — apply for membership if you qualify. At No 58, Dean Street Records — with thousands of lovely old LPs — specialises in film soundtracks, shows and such vocalists as Sinatra and



Chinese-style phone booth

Eydie Gorme. James Bond is highly collectable (£10-£90), as are cult film albums such as *Barbarella*, *The Italian Job* and *Bullitt* (about £40 each). Back in Old Compton Street is the Algerian Coffee Stores — a beautiful shop established in 1897, heady with the strong aroma of 60 coffees and 140 teas. The most popular coffee is a high-roast blend of South American and Central American beans called Velluto Nero at £2.60 for half a pound. Excellent espresso and cappuccino are available to drink on the premises, and the shop also sells all manner of tea and coffee-making paraphernalia.

Before succumbing to the joys of dinner, have a look in P. Denny, a splendid old oak-panelled shop specialising in clothes for the catering trade: boring things such as aprons,

yes — but also chic double-breasted chefs' jackets with Nehru collars and buttons in any colour you like at just £13.95. And why haven't the fashion pages plundered the blue-and-white check chefs' trousers at £7.50 and striped waistcoats (£27.50)?

Garments of a very different nature abound at Agent Provocateur in Broadwick Street. This is a seriously sexy shop selling all sorts of upmarket lingerie in deep pink, purple and turquoise and aqua-green. Marilyn Monroe is in the window, bending over a chair wearing exceedingly abbreviated underwear — stopping the traffic, not for the first time.

Prices range from £9 for stockings ("We don't sell tights — not sexy") to hundreds for a feather-trimmed negligée. Batches of six pairs of 1950s nylons are available in their original boxes at £90.

Time to cool down and perhaps to fill up at one of Soho's long-established restaurants: L'Escargot in Greek Street — opened in 1927 — has just received a well-merited Michelin rosette from £70 for a dinner for two, with wine). Or try L'Epicure, in Frith Street — opened in 1953 — a restaurant that has barely changed since those nylon stockings were made. Dishes such as entrecôte Diane (£8) are cooked to order at your table. Two flaming torches guide you to this fine restaurant — welcome beacons after all this tramping around.

JOSEPH CONNOLLY



The Vintage Magazine Company has back issues of everything from *Beano* to *Playboy*

● (Telephone numbers have the prefix 0171 unless stated otherwise.) China China, 3 Gerrard Street (439 7502); Lido Restaurant, 41 Gerrard Street (437 4431); Loom Fung, 42 Gerrard Street (437 7179); Sound of China, 6 Gerrard Street (734 1970); Anything Left Handed, 57 Brewer Street (437 3910); Vintage Magazine Company, 39-43 Brewer Street (439 8525); Simply Sausages, 93 Berwick Street (287 3482); Gerry's Club, 52 Dean Street (437 4160); No 58, Dean Street Records (437 4500); Camisa and Son, 61 Old Compton Street (437 7610); Algerian Coffee Stores, 52 Old Compton Street (437 2480); P Denny &

FACT FILE

Co. 39 Old Compton Street (437 1654); Agent Provocateur, 6 Broadwick Street (439 0229); L'Epicure, 28 Frith Street (437 2829); L'Escargot, 48 Greek Street (437 0790). ● The Chinese New Year, the Year of the Rat, starts on Monday. Celebrations will be on Sunday, February 25. The Lion Dance begins about 1.10pm in Leicester Square and continues into Chinatown, followed by a display of martial arts at about 1.30pm. For more details ring 0171-734 5161. Other cities celebrating on February 25 include: Manchester (0161-236 4515); Liverpool (0151-708 8833); Newcastle (0191-232 8520).

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Why this belly-flattening video works in just 7 minutes a day

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My Video guarantees you a perfect abdominal workout every time - all in just 7 minutes. And these exercises are safe, effective, fun - and they work!

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For sure that you are doing each exercise properly. And you will know for sure that you are devoting the proper time to each exercise. And most important I will be right there guiding and encouraging you all the way. I promise I will flatten your pot belly and slim your midsection as quickly and easily that you won't believe your eyes. A firm, flat stomach makes you look and feel better. Your posture often improves and nagging back problems often disappear.

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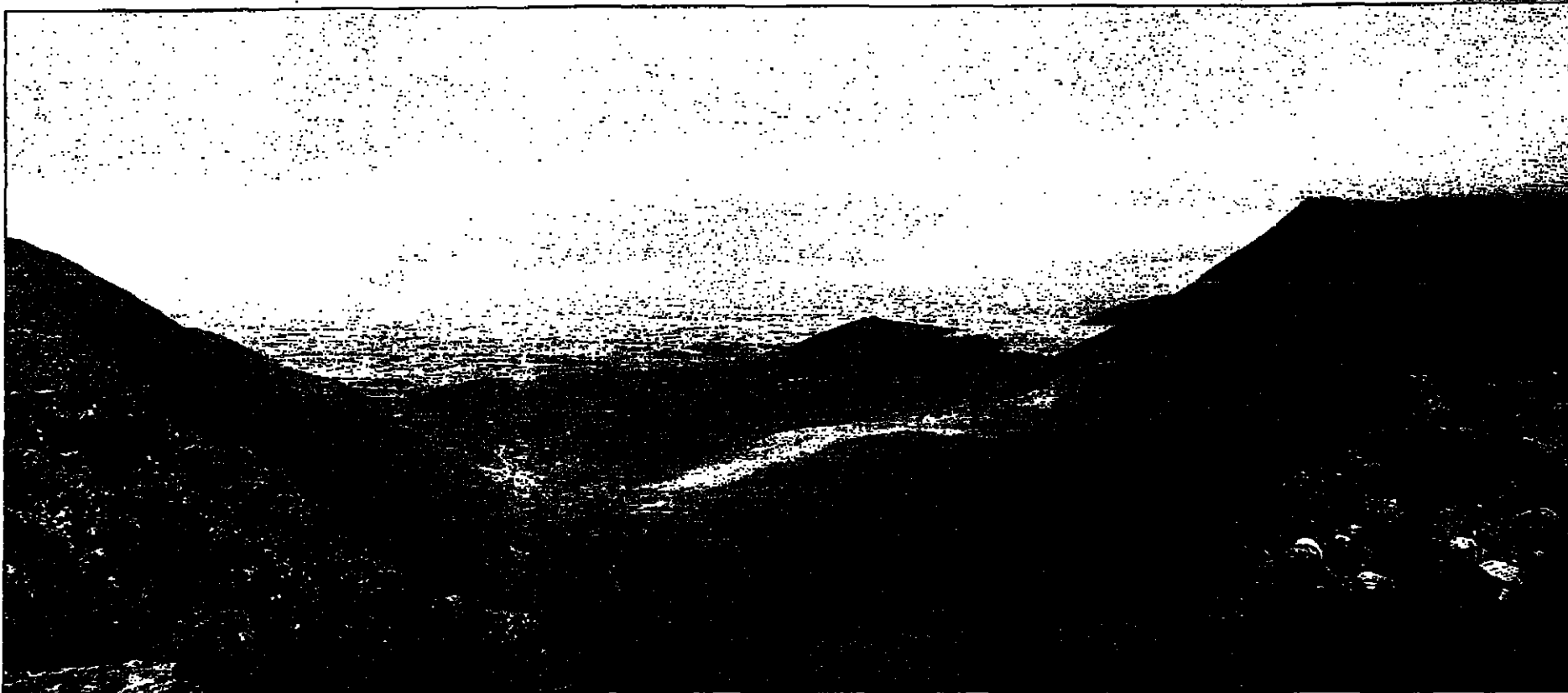
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IRELAND AND WALES: Struggling up a mountain in Co Kerry and going down a mine in Gwynedd



A panoramic view of the west coast of Ireland from half way up Carrauntoohil in Co Kerry. From the base to the 3,000m summit and back, takes four to six hours

Whenever I walk across a country I have to climb the highest peak that lies along the way. This has long been a matter of principle and is one of the reasons why I avoid Nepal. I have been up Ben Nevis and Snowdon and the Mulhacen in Spain, so when I walked across Ireland I had to climb Carrauntoohil. When I say "climb" I mean "walk". The nylon rope and piton are not for me; I can even get a bit unsteady on a stepladder. Fortunately, most mountains can be climbed the pretty way: up a footpath, and when you get to the top the views are just the same. Having said that, the views from Carrauntoohil depend on the weather; when it's good you can see the Ring of Kerry, the Purple Mountains, Macgillcuddy's Reeks and the glorious west coast of Ireland. The day I went up you could see for, well, yards.

Carrauntoohil is spelt in a number of ways, including Corran Tuathail, but at least you can pronounce it. Two neighbouring peaks are called Cloughaunagillybaur and Knocknafregan and are, therefore, avoided for that

reason. If you can't say where you have been, what's the point of going there? Carrauntoohil is not very high. It rises to about 1,000 metres (3,280ft). A notice in the car park at the bottom says that you can get to the top and back in four hours. That must be for an active goat wearing an aquilung. When I was there, the rain was coming down in stair rods, and I had a terrible cold. I had to hang about in a pub for four days waiting for decent weather, and became a martyr to hangovers. A day on the hill was just what I needed, but this particular day was the one I should have avoided.

Like most mountains, the way to the Carrauntoohil summit starts with the walk to "base camp". This was in a farmyard, where I had an encounter with an amorous donkey. The walk led beside a



Carrauntoohil fact file

□ Carrauntoohil stands on the Iveragh peninsula of Co Kerry, southwest Ireland, close to the town of Killarney. The nearest big town is Killarney. Bed and breakfast accommodation is widely available around Killarney from £15 (£14) per night.

□ Full details of holidays and walking routes in the west of Ireland are available from the Bord Fáilte, The Irish Tourist Board, 150 New Bond Street, London, W1Y 0AQ (0171-493 3201).

foaming stream to the Hags Glen. Here the rain was coming down horizontally, as they say round here, and the wind snatched my map away. This was not a problem, because I could see the mountain ahead, and the white scar on the face that had to be the Devil's Ladder. This was said to be the best way to the top, even if the name was a bit off-putting.

The next task was to cross the river Gaddagh, which was, of course, in spate. The

ford under deep water so I crossed on some high but slippery rocks. Once across I found that the real river was further up, so I crossed back, using the ever-popular frantic leap method. Frantic leaps in soaking trousers are rarely successful; I fell short and into the river and suffered a sense of humour failure.

It is some measure of the weather that it was wetter out of the river than in, but I poured the Gaddagh out of my trousers and squelched on

towards the Ladder. As I got closer I could make out specks moving slowly up and down the mountain side, a comforting indication that I was not the only fool on the hill that day.

I could also see that the Ladder was an almost vertical rock and scree slope, with a stream running down it. Falling water was throwing drifts of spray across the rock and I could see no obvious way up. On a dry day, climbing the Ladder might be no more than a gentle scramble. On a wet day the Ladder doubles as a waterfall. Every time I grabbed a rock, a stream of muddy water shot up my sleeve and small stones and large rocks came bouncing past my head, to add a little terror to the day. I do not exaggerate. The Devil's Ladder is not the North Face of the Eiger — it only felt like it.

The only way up any steep path is to pick the easiest route, take short steps and keep going. This method eventually got me to a grassy plateau where an Irish family were having a picnic. This was on a terrible day and in a "one hand for the egg sandwich, and one hand for yourself" sort of spot. But then, the Irish can be like that.

"Thank God that's over," I said, flopping on the grass. "Could I ask you to take my photograph?"

"You are not at the top yet," I was told. "It's another 40 minutes to the summit."

It took a bit of doing, but I managed not to break down.

From the top of the Devil's Ladder a winding track led up and away into the cloud. Off I plodded, up and up... and up, meeting cheery types who shrieked, "Keep going," or "Only another hour" and other encouraging phrases as they bounded past.

The last pitch to the summit leads over a number of false crests. It was now growing dark. I was beginning to despair of ever reaching level ground again when out of the mist loomed a large, green, metal cross, just with enough light left for my "Been there, done that" picture. All I had to do now was get down.

It is well known in walking circles that going down is often worse than going up. Seen from the top the Devil's Ladder looked steep and nasty but if I had any sense I wouldn't be doing this at my age and, anyway, we laugh at danger on the travel pages.

I poured a stream of muddy water out of my boots, wrung out my socks and put them on again, set off down the hill... and it went like a dream. I was past caring.

Two hours later I was back in the pub, steaming gently by the fire and telling lies. For the moment, the truth lies in the statistics: distance to the summit and back, perhaps four miles. Time taken: six hours. State on return: wrinkled all over, like a prune. Climbing Carrauntoohil is a great walk, but I'd choose a sunny day if I were you.

ROBIN NEILLANDS

Illuminating a golden age

Members of the Royal Family who defy the actuarial odds and embark on matrimony will qualify for wedding rings fashioned from gold extracted at the Gwynfynydd mine. The rest of us must probably settle for a three-hour guided tour of this historic Welsh warren.

Welsh gold has been used in royal wedding rings for generations and a one-kilogram ingot from the mine in the Meirionnydd district of Gwynedd was presented to the Queen in 1986 to mark her 60th birthday.

Celtic prices were gold torques around their necks as a symbol of their rank, and early writers in the Welsh language tell of chieftains who rode in chariots of gold. Hill-sides here are honeycombed with shafts dug by invading Romans in the first century.

The metal was discovered in Gwynfynydd at the height of the Welsh gold rush in the middle of the last century. Since the mine reopened in 1992, more than 2,000 ounces of gold have been recovered. However, it takes two tonnes of ore to produce one ounce of gold, which is why the owners of Gwynfynydd have diversified into tourism.

Visits begin and end at the new Gold Centre in Dolgellau. In the 18th century the town was the focus of a prosperous wool industry and classic Welsh cloth, flannel and tapestries are still woven here.

The granite-grey town nestles in spectacular surroundings on the southern edge of the Snowdonia National Park. In autumn, the gold underground is matched by the splendour of the hillside foliage. In winter, snow simplifies the landscape into a monochrome grandeur. Charles Darwin once said of Cader Idris, whose peak at 2,927ft presides over the area: "Old Cader is a grand fellow."

A minibus takes visitors from Dolgellau to the mine along tracks which, in some places, descend to white-water streams. On the way, you pass Cymmer Abbey, where a 12th-century charter accorded monks the right in digging or carrying away metals and treasures free from secular exaction.

On arrival, visitors are kitted out in protective clothing. Lamps are clipped to hard hats and heavy batteries hung on belts. Steel doors slammed ominously behind us to prevent mountain walkers straying into the mine during blasting. Quickly, we learnt to tilt our heads to direct the beams from helmet lamps into

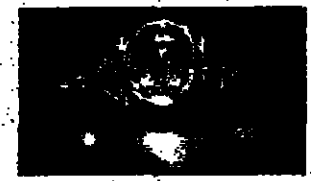
the surrounding gloom. When our guide alluded to some quartz above us, the tunnel roof was suddenly illuminated by beams from a dozen lamps.

At one stage, parties are invited to switch off their lamps so that they can sample the darkness in which early miners, equipped only with candles, for which they were charged by niggardly employers, would have spent their ten-hour shifts.

Thanks to constant demand, particularly from expatriates intent on carrying off an 18-carat chunk of the land of their fathers, Gwynfynydd gold retails at about three times the price of that on the London bullion market.

At the end of their tour, visitors can watch craftsmen creating jewellery in the Gold Centre. All the metal mined here is used in this way.

Toxic chemicals which are normally employed in the extraction of gold are shunned at Gwynfynydd. Waste rock is packed into old workings so that there is no unsightly



Two rings fashioned at Gwynfynydd's Gold Centre

surface dumping. Even the water pumped from the mine is treated to remove impurities before being returned to the nearby river.

During the tour, we were given a lesson in panning for gold in a trough of water containing low-grade ore. Visitors can keep all that glistens. More than 30 tourists have struck lucky since the mine opened to the public in 1993.

One woman is said to have found a nugget about the size of half a fingernail. Gold rushes and tourist attractions thrive on such tidings.

ALAN ROAD

● The author was a guest of the Welsh Gold Centre (01341 423332), Mon-Sat 9.30am-5pm. Visitors are advised to book in advance. The mine is not suitable for wheelchairs or children under four. Tours £9.50, senior citizens £7.50, children £5.

Win a weekend break, page 24

From Santiago de Compostela to Salamanca

We commence our journey as have many millions of pilgrims before us at the magnificent city of Santiago de Compostela, where for two days we explore the cathedral, with its wonders of Romanesque and medieval architecture and the town itself. The road to Compostela was one of the three great pilgrim routes from the 10th century onwards, thousands of men and women flocked to the shrine of St James, and over the years the pilgrim roads had a deep influence on the art and culture of northern Spain.

From Santiago we drive south through Galicia through Vigo to Braga in the Minho district of Portugal and on to Oporto where we join the MV Lady May for a seven-night cruise along the beautiful River Douro.

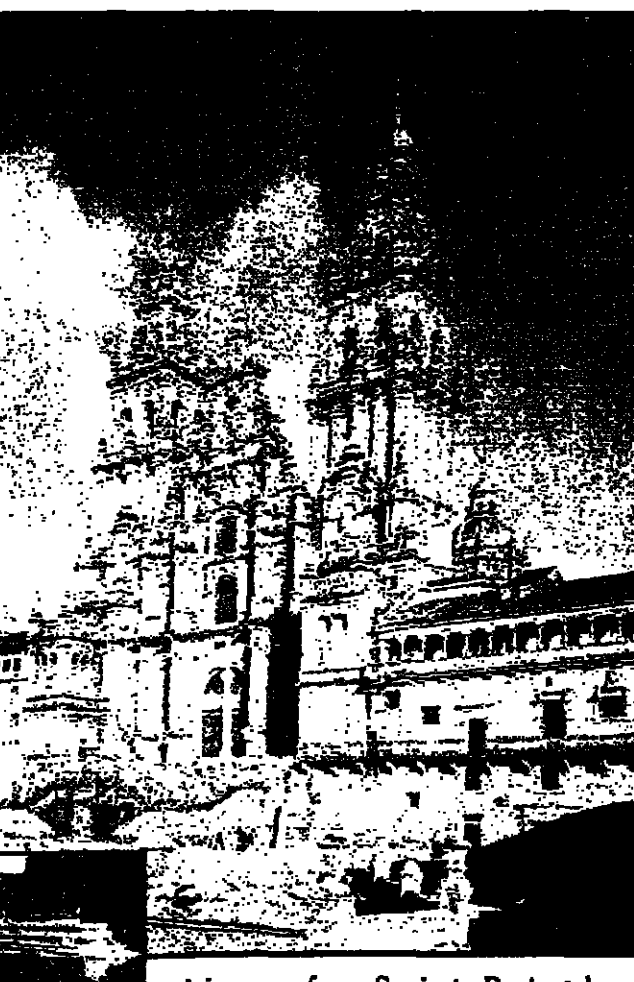
Each port of call offers the unexpected and unusual whether it is the finely decorated tiled murals of the station at Pinheiro or the dramatic church at Lamego. Throughout the journey we will encounter Roman bridges, cathedrals and castles, the raising and lowering of the locks bearing us along the river are an engineering marvel too.

After disembarking at Oporto we travel east through this magnificent country, passing famous battle sites of Wellington and Napoleon at Rodrigo and enter Spain and Extremadura and the city of Salamanca with its unusual twin cathedral and cloisters where we spend the following two days. We then proceed to Avila, the city of the mystics St Teresa and St John of the Cross before continuing to Madrid for a short visit.

Itinerary
Day 1 Depart in the early evening from Oporto to Santiago de Compostela with Iberian Airlines on a 727. The flight will take approx. 2 hours. Stay two nights.

Day 2 A leisurely day exploring the town of Santiago de Compostela: visit the magnificent cathedral, one of the wonders of Romanesque and medieval architecture.

Day 3 We drive south from Santiago crossing over into Portugal and stopping for lunch at Braga. The old town of Braga is ancient and compact with no fewer than twelve churches. Continue to Oporto and embark on the Lady May.



A journey from Spain to Portugal including a week's cruise on the beautiful River Douro
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Days 4-9 After a morning's sightseeing in Oporto, cross the Douro to visit the port lodges. Return to the vessel for lunch and depart for Entre-os-Rios. The cruise continues upstream with visits to Peso da Régua, Lamego, Tua, Barca Alameda, São José da Passagem, São Salvador do Mundo and Pinhão before returning to Oporto.

Day 10 Disembark and travel by road to Salamanca for a two-night stay. Salamanca has been famous as a seat of learning since the University was founded in the 13th century by Alfonso IX.

Day 11 Our sightseeing in Salamanca will include the University buildings and quadrangles, the twin Cathedral and cloisters and Plaza Mayor, one of the most beautiful squares in Spain.

Day 12 Drive to Avila where we take lunch before continuing to Madrid to connect with the evening Iberian Airlines 727 flight to London Gatwick (approx. 2 hours).

In Holland in 1992 and operating under the British flag the MV Lady May has the capacity for 160 guests in twin cabins, all of which are facing outwards.

This cruise vessel meets all of the requirements of the European Internal Waterways Navigation Inspectorate. The Lady May is fully air-conditioned, with a sundeck, lounge, bar and a one-sitting dining room. In addition there are limited shops and library facilities. The cabins are spread over 3 decks and all have private toilet and shower facilities.

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Price includes: flights, transfers, hotel accommodation on bed and breakfast, 7 nights on the MV Lady May with full board, excursions, services of local guides, fuel, insurance, insurance, airport taxes, tips. All prices are subject to change. If necessary, we will be pleased to offer a different departure date to suit your requirements and in order to avoid congestion at particular times.

Madrid Extension
Spend an extra two nights in Madrid at the 3-star Arisa Hotel, or similar, on bed and breakfast for £98 per person in a twin (€62 single supplement).

Spend a Week on the River Douro
We are also offering a straight 7-night cruise along the River Douro, flying from London on Day 3 of the above itinerary and following the same routing, returning by air on Day 10. Tariff from £795. Please contact us for full information.

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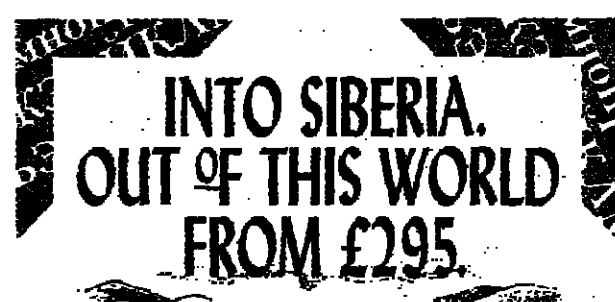
Answers from page 25

HAKENKREUZ
(c) The Nazi swastika, German for the crooked cross. A Hindu emblem used by Kipling, abused by Hitler.

MOJO
(c) An addict's name for any narcotic drug, especially morphine. US drug slang. Origin unknown.

KERGUELEN
(c) The name of a group of islands in the southern Indian Ocean, used attributively as in *Kerguelen cabbage*, a cabbage-like plant of a disgusting taste. *Pringlea antiscorbutica*, of the family Cruciferae, which is confined to several islands in this region. "The Kerguelen's Land cabbage, cabbage though it be, is a cherished object in the recollection of the mariner."

MEHARI
(a) An Arabian, single-humped camel, used for riding, from the classical Arabic *mahr* of Mahra, a province in South Arabia. R. Hichens, *Garden of Allah*, 1904: "He who smokes the keef is like a mehari with a swollen tongue," he rejoined.



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SKIING: Alastair Brett's glasses steam up on a singles holiday, and Doug Sager gives a safety warning

Sloping off alone on a downward track

My wife and I last went skiing six years ago. By then she had decided that "not being able to stop" was a problem, even on those sky-blue days when the sun sparkles on the snow, the panorama is breathtaking and the silence of the piste is pure magic.

Her decision not to ski again was a relief: early morning reconnaissance to find the gentlest of blue runs and the endless wait for her to catch up were beginning to take their toll. So this time, with her blessing, I was off on a single-type holiday to Verbier.

Verbier, at 1,500m, is one of those up-market Swiss resorts where the British have skied for years. Much of its old-world charm has gone and these days it is a huge sprawl of large chalets with fashion shops, parked Range Rovers and expensive furs.

A favourite with keen skiers, its four valleys are linked with the resorts of Nendaz, Thyon 2000, Veysonnaz and La Tzoumaz. The 400km of piste and trails comprise 40 per cent for novices (green/blue runs), 42 per cent for intermediate skiers (red runs) and the remaining 18 per cent for experts (black runs).

Many of the lower, north-facing slopes among the trees at Savoleyres, Nendaz and Thyon are a pure pleasure to ski given good snow. The higher, steeper slopes above Verbier, from the steep, black mogul fields at the summit of Mont-Fort (more than 3,000m) to the more gentle red runs down to La Chaux, demand a variety of techniques.

Queuing at some lifts in high season is inevitable, particularly at bottlenecks, such as Tordin, but one of Verbier's advantages is that it is only 170km from Geneva airport, about two hours by car or coach up into the Alps.

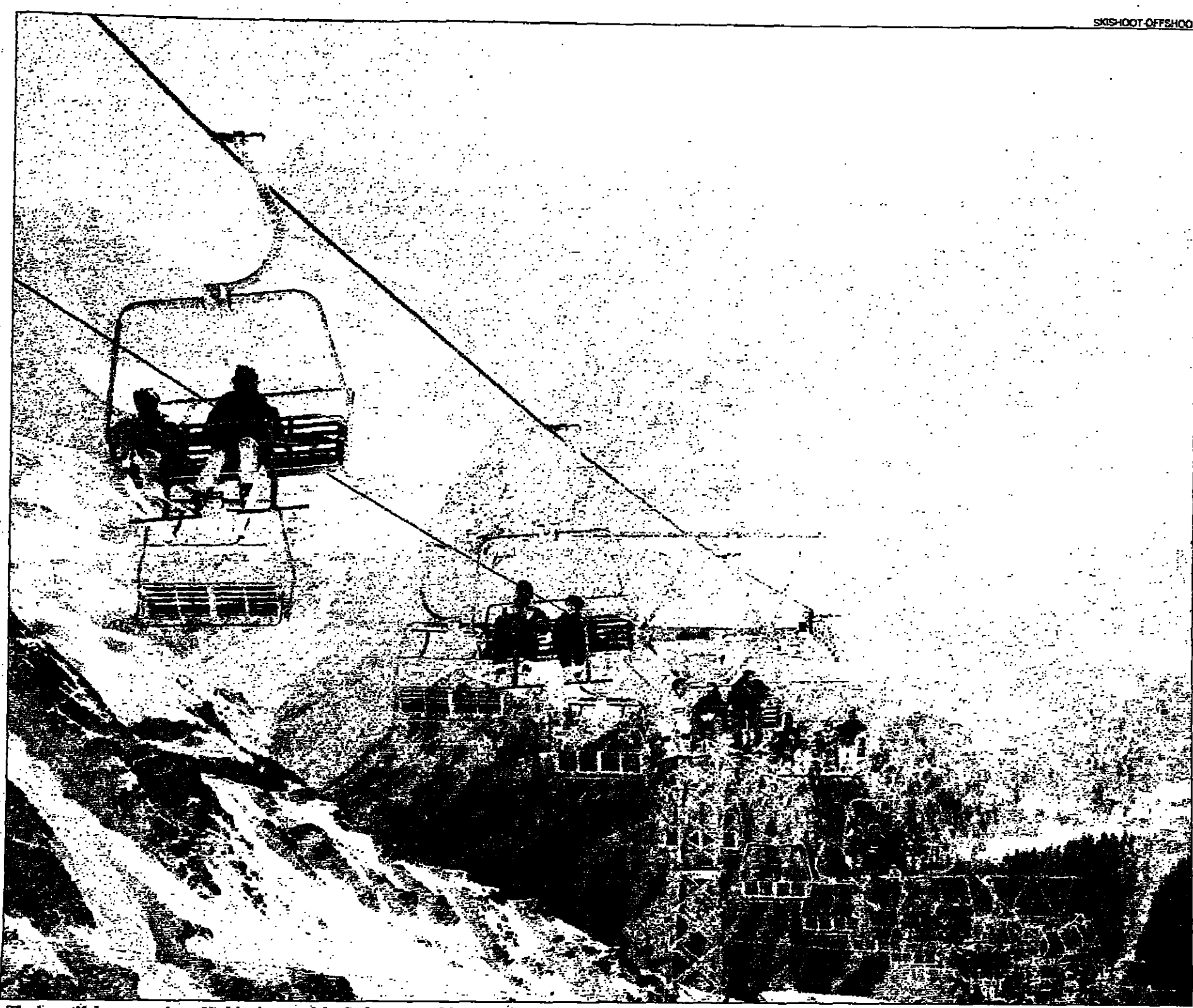
For genuine singles the large Clarmont Chalet is likely to be first choice because it has so many single rooms. But the smaller, cosier La Diure chalet was where I found myself with six other young professionals in their thirties.

Our chalet girl, Maddy, had travelled extensively and could ruin a waistline in seconds with her wonderful creamy cakes in the afternoon and gallons of wine with the meal in the evening.

On the first day, the Bladon Lines' ski guides, Richard and Allen, showed clients of intermediate to advanced level around the slopes. This was a good way to meet people from other chalets, from a tank fitter at Vickers to a couple of chatty school teachers from Surrey.

The packed lunches came out at midday, high up on a sunny ridge above Thyon, with panoramic views towards the Matterhorn.

On the second day, I decided to take up the Ski Club of Great Britain's offer of a free day's skiing with their rep over the Four Valleys. The Ski Club has reps in 34 of the main resorts around Europe. They are all proficient skiers, who provide a friendly face for British skiers and help to



The beautiful scenery above Verbier is one of the Swiss resort's big attractions for skiers. High up on Mont-Fort (3,000m) there are panoramic views towards the Matterhorn

Safety on the piste

THE combined effects of public holidays around Europe and a major snowfall make the coming week the most crowded on the Alps. It is a case of the survival of the fittest, so follow these guidelines taken from the International Ski Federation rules for the conduct of skiers.

1. Respect for others: a skier must behave in such a way that others are not endangered or prejudiced.
2. Control of speed and skidding: a skier must adapt his speed and manner of skiing to his personal ability and to the conditions of terrain, snow and weather, and the density of traffic.
3. Choice of route: a skier coming from behind must choose his route in such a way that he does not endanger skiers ahead.
4. Overtaking: a skier may overtake another skier above or below and to the right or the left, provided that he leaves enough space for the overtaken skier to make any voluntary or involuntary movement.
5. Entering and starting: a skier entering a marked run or starting again after stopping must ensure that the run is clear of others.
6. Stopping on the piste: a skier must avoid stopping on the piste in narrow places or where visibility is restricted. After a fall in such a place, a skier must move clear of the piste as soon as possible.
7. Climbing and descending on foot: a skier on foot must keep to the side of the piste.
8. Respect for signs and markings: a skier must respect all of these.
9. Assistance: in accidents, every skier is bound to assist.
10. Identification: every skier and witness must exchange names and addresses after an accident.

• The Ski Club of Great Britain (0171-245 1033) has a safety sheet explaining the FIS rules in detail.

Fact file

□ The author was guest of Bladon Lines, 56/58 Putney High Street, London SW15 1SF (0181-785 3131) and the Verbier Tourist Office.

□ He stayed in Verbier at La Diure chalet: £369 per person full chalet board for one week, including flights and transfers from Geneva. But look for special offers or less expensive chalets, such as Tom Kitten, or Clarmont Chalet with its single rooms.

□ The Verbier ski pass costs £153 for six days (not including Mont-Fort). Hire of standard skis for six days £60, boots £31. Two hours' ski school instruction over five days £55. Insurance for a week £31.

□ The Ski Club of Great Britain (0171-245 1033).

guide people around the slopes. After trying a day's skiing, you are asked if you would like to join the club — £41 for those living out of London and £44-£45 for those in the London area. For this, a member has the opportunity to ski with the club's reps throughout their holiday, and to benefit from an extensive information service about resorts, snow conditions and discounts on holidays and ski equipment.

I spent the last two days skiing with the others from my chalet, a mix of intermediate to advanced skiers. We skied together on most of the runs in the area.

When it came to après-ski, the others, being more serious skiers and appreciating the need for rest, left me to my own devices.

I soon found out that on Mondays all the tour company

reps and chalet girls decamp to Tara's nightclub, which becomes a "heaving sweaty mass" on the dance floor late in the evening. I decided to give this a miss.

Next on the list of watering holes was the Mont-Fort pub. Within seconds of walking in my glasses steamed up and I was unable to locate any of the ski fanatics I was expecting to be there.

Leaving the Mont-Fort, I plodded down to the place not to miss in Verbier — the Farm, the internationally known and hugely expensive nightclub. I arrived at 11.20pm but the place was virtually deserted. The kindly doorman, sensing a novice, advised me to come back later when things were "in full swing, between 12.30 and 1am".

With a well-concealed sigh of relief, I decided to leave it to the minor royals and jet-setters to burn the candle at both ends on this occasion.

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NORWAY: The Victorians dangled the bait — now the Namsen river is a magnet for anglers worldwide

We were in central Norway, about 100 miles north of Trondheim, once Norway's capital and where Viking Olav Trygvason governed the Norwegian empire in 997. Trondheim is a beautiful city. It is a port of call for the world's cruise ships before they venture farther north in search of the midnight sun. Shore excursions take passengers to view the 11th-century Nidaros Cathedral where the kings of Norway are crowned.

A South African couple from the *Canberra* were overcome by the beauty of the fjords. Later, though, we met an Australian coach party who vowed never to return, for they had not seen the sun at midday let alone midnight.

Just outside the small town of Grong is one of the most thrilling sights any salmon angler could wish to see. The mighty Namsen river, famous for yielding monstrous salmon of 40, 50 and even 60lb, turns gracefully on a meander 100 yards wide and rushes into a tantalising tail before turning white and bubbly to form the neck of another pool. It continues

Where the river runs wild

ued swirling and chattering in a language only a salmon angler understands.

"I scarcely dare describe the feelings with which I approached Spillum, the first stage from Bangsund, and where I knew I should obtain the first view of the Namsen," wrote the Rev William Belton in *Two Summers in Norway*, published in 1840.

"The very first glance satisfied me. I had at last reached the real river for an angler: a deep, broad stream rolled majestically into a beautiful bay, that in its turn opened into a noble fjord."

The jewel in this Namsen crown is the cottage of Per Olav Moum, owner and boatman of its superb beat of

water. Moum farmhouse was built by his great-grandfather in 1891. It only exists because an Englishman called Frank Dugdale, who had been renting the fishing, decided, as Victorian sportsmen did, that he must have a home overlooking the river.

The house has changed little since it was built. As you enter the musty atmosphere, there is a feeling of welcome, as though at any moment gentlemen in Harris tweeds and plus fours will greet you with a whisky and soda. The rooms, with their exposed floorboards and pine panelling, echo to your footsteps. The walls carry wooden carvings of 50lb salmon, and all around are the memories: photographs main-

ly, but as you keep walking you feel more and more that you have stepped back in time. The master bedroom still has its iron and brass beds and a Victorian wash-stand. Next door is the bathroom with its original roll-top bath in which many a fisherman will have soaked away the aches and pains of wrestling Namsen salmon to the shore.

Only the kitchen has been modernised, but not too much. The fridge, still working perfectly, dates from the 1950s. In the tackle room there is the greatest discovery of all. Fishing rods sent here not long after the turn of the century lie in their packing crates, marked "Newcastle to Bergen". In another box, fly cases

and wallets stuffed with Durham Rangers, Mar Lodges and Silver Doctors. And in a trunk lie Hardy reels, some still carrying their silk lines. So heavy were they that you needed two hands to pick them up to reveal the owner's name: "Bainbridge, Esq. Espley Hall Morpeth."

George Bainbridge was a businessman who founded a department store in Newcastle. He fished the Namsen for more than 25 years, ending in the 1930s, and his son continued in his footsteps until 1956. Well into his eighties, Mr Bainbridge still travelled to Grong to fish his beloved river. Hardly able to walk, he brought two nurses to take care of him. Each day he was carried into the boat but, at the age of 87, he caught a 57lb salmon.

Today fishermen from all over the world travel here to do battle with the great fish. For £500 a day you too could take this beat, with the services of Per Olav as a boatman, and stay in the old house. Christian Cheterville, a Frenchman living in Budapest, has been making the trip for the past 17 years. His dream to catch a big salmon on a fly hasn't materialised. "I hope I'm getting closer and I think I will come back here until I get the big one."

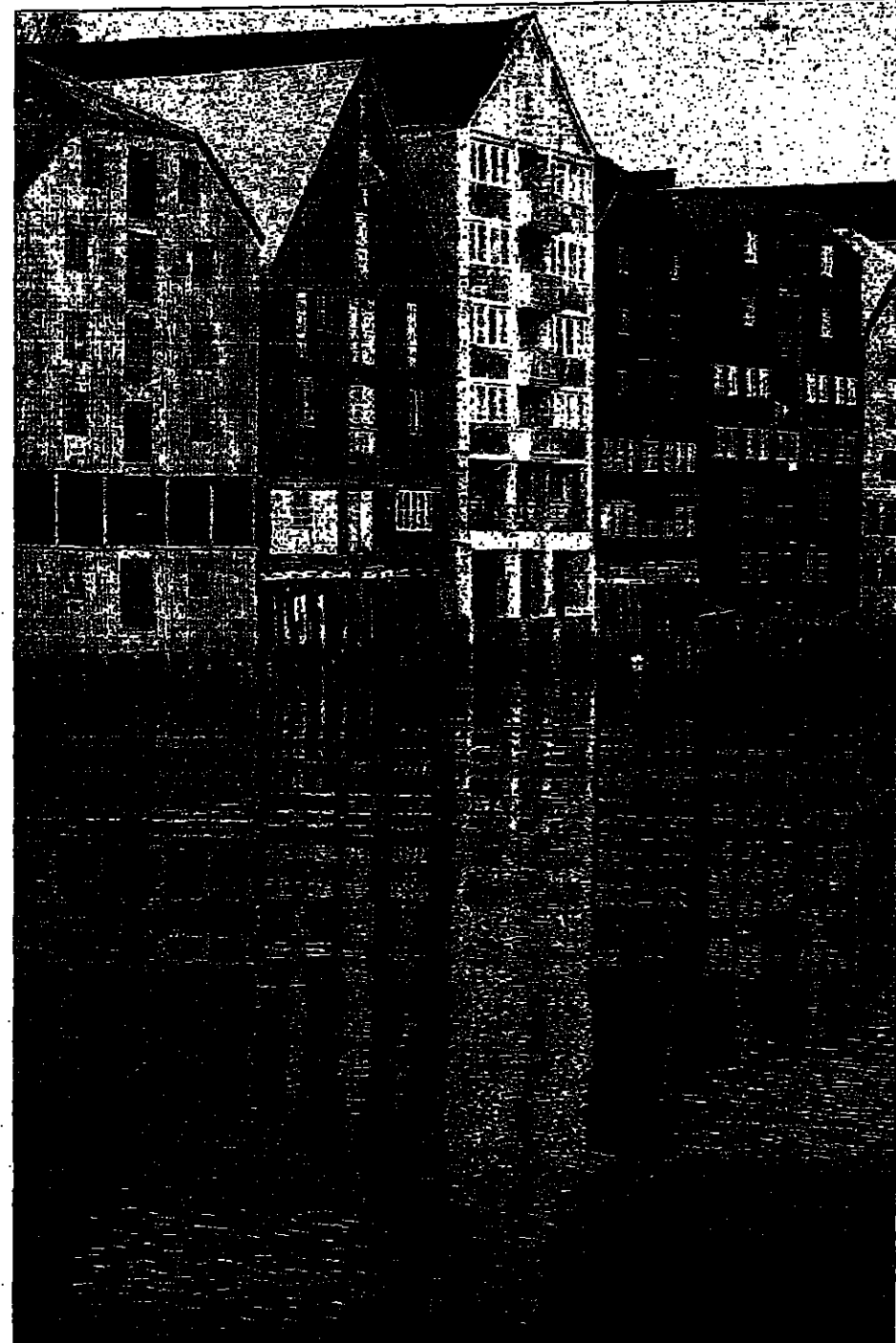
Myfi Heim, on the other hand, a petite English lady from London, has taken only four years to land her fish of a lifetime. It weighed 44lb and took nearly two hours to gaff. "I like to stalk it. I like to hook it, kill it and have it on the table — that's why I fish."

And then there was Richard Flasch from Vienna, member of the International Game Fish Association, who holds many world records and is a wonderfully funny man, is petrified of his French friend's driving. "Alain Prost in disguise," said Richard. We thought the same as he drove us at breakneck speed to sample the delights of another much smaller salmon river, the Argard. That was when we lost Richard. He went to try out one of the 14 rods he'd brought with him and disappeared for two hours.

As we set up our own 15ft Viking fly rod, made by Bruce and Walker, Richard pounced on it to admire its construction. You felt he would be happy to add it to his collection.

Americans were also in town, in the shape of John Armstrong from Connecticut. He was not a happy man. After a week's fishing his score was zero. His trip had cost him well over \$4,000 (£2,700) and he was beginning to wonder if there were any fish in the river at all, although his friend had managed a 31-pounder on a Red Bomber bought in the local tackle shop. "It's time to ask questions in Oslo," said John. "There seems to be an ambivalence on the part of the authorities, who are more related to ocean fishing and netting than the sports fisherman." John would be writing to the Norwegian Fisheries Minister.

Norway is expensive and is not noted for its food. However, during our overnight stay at the Royal Garden Hotel in Trondheim we ate



Land of the midnight sun: picturesque Trondheim was once Norway's capital

delicious fish soup, followed by a dish of catfish, prawns and salmon. There was also fillet of reindeer and a pudding of wild cloudberries and cream. With a bottle of wine (£18 a bottle) dinner for two came to about £60.

And then there was the great Norwegian breakfast. Puffed wheat, muesli, dried fruit and raisins, yogurts, Norwegian flat bread, coleslaw, mountains of scrambled eggs, sausages, pâté, ham and salami. On another serve-yourself counter were herrings, sardines, boiled eggs, Jarlsberg cheese, fruit juices, hot chocolate, coffee or tea. A huge jug of waffle mix was on tap for the waffle iron and everyone made their own.

For the remaining five days the Vertshuset Hotel in Grong took care of our every need. About £100 a day got you full board and lodging and the same high standard of food. Reindeer turned up again and, of course, salmon, salmon and more salmon. The rooms were more than comfortable (but no bath only a shower) and the owner, Jon Ivar Moe, went out of his way to cater for fishermen.

With a 21lb salmon in the bag, caught after half an hour of exhilarating play on a Thunder and Lightning tube fly, a grise (a small salmon)



Fact file

- The author was a guest of Braathens, which flies from Newcastle and Gatwick to Bergen, Oslo and Stavanger with a connecting flight to Trondheim. Cost from £232 from Newcastle. £244 from Gatwick. For details: 0191-214 0991.
- Angling holidays arranged by NORSC Holidays (01297 560033).
- The Moum Farmhouse (00) 47 7433 2122.
- Hotels: Royal Garden Hotel, Trondheim — (00) 47 7352 1100. Vertshuset Hotel, Grong, will also arrange fishing trips on the Namsen. Cost about £300 per day for full board and lodging including fishing and the use of a guide — (00) 47 7433 1366.
- Time to go: June to August. The midnight sun is visible from 12 May to 1 August.

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BURMA: Peter Hughes, in reflective mood, cruises down the Irrawaddy and discovers a new Nile

On the new boat from Mandalay

Should ships, like sheep, ever be declared "sentient beings", spare a thought for the feelings of the M.S. *Nederland*. She is in shock. Two years ago she was an unsuspecting hotel ship, berthed at Dresden on the River Elbe in Germany and settled into semi-retirement after 30 years' service as a cruiser on the Rhine. Today she is in the Far East, starting in what promises to be the year's most spectacular and controversial holiday production.

Plucked from Europe and anonymity, and transported halfway round the world on the marine equivalent of a low-loader, she has a new name and a new career. The *Nederland* is now the *Road to Mandalay*, registered in Yangon and flying the flag of Myanmar as she operates champagne-style cruises on the River Ayeyarwady in one of the ten poorest nations on earth.

It is not just the ship which has undergone a change of identity. The river is still better known by its previous name, the Irrawaddy. Yangon was Rangoon and Myanmar is what we are now expected to call Burma. "Visit Myanmar Year" — which this is — would be all the more persuasive if people knew where it is.

James B. Sherwood knows. He is the buccaneer American businessman who brought us the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express and is responsible for the *Nederland*'s makeover. To help the rest of us to find our way to Burma, he has posted young men in maroon longis (sarong) with "Road to Mandalay" placards all the way from Thailand to the gangplank of the ship. They are in Bangkok airport at the Myanmar Airways check-in, in Rangoon to shepherd passengers through immigration to their Air Mandalay connection, and in Mandalay to steer them to where the ship is moored.

This month, Mr. Sherwood was at the top of the gangplank to greet his guests for the inaugural cruise. They might have been the cast from an Edwardian novel: a prince and two princesses from the Endsleigh League of European royalty, our own much-travelled Princess Michael of Kent among them; a duke; a *marches and marches*; a film star, Helena Bonham Carter; and assorted lords and ladies, whose names tended to be the same as their addresses. When someone referred to a lady friend it could have been a title or a position.

Those without titles merely had money. A woman returning to a sightseeing bus with a parcel of lacquerware explained to her husband where it might go: "This is not for Monaco or Barbados or London but it could be perfect for Hong Kong or Majorca."

Their first experience of the river was not on the *Road to Mandalay* but aboard a tubby local passenger ferry chartered by Orient-Express to make the hour-and-a-half journey upstream to Mingun. Under the shelter of a green tin roof, wicker chairs had been arranged in outward facing lines on the upper deck from which to inspect the passing country. It was like travelling in a cricket pavilion.

Mingun would have had the largest Buddhist pagoda in the world had the Burmese not managed to complete it. Instead, it possesses one of the largest piles of bricks in the world, which you can climb with a local child taking your hand. At the bottom the com-



A humble wooden boat ferries locals across the Irrawaddy against the backdrop of an ancient pagoda — a scene that greets passengers luxuriating aboard the *Road to Mandalay*

panionship is expected to be repaid with a soft drink, though the 11-year-old boy who befriended me appeared to expect a can of lager.

Only in the past few years have the doors to Burma been more than ajar. Visas now run for four weeks instead of seven days, and the country is promoting itself. Yet even at Rangoon's great, gilded Shwedagon pagoda the visitors are nearly all Burmese.

This is that rare moment in a developing tourist country when the Western visitor can still feel he or she has the country to themselves. It will not last: new hotels are going up faster than mushrooms; Air Mandalay is a new, Singapore-based domestic airline. However fanciful, Visit Myanmar Year has a target of half a million visitors.

The country is governed by a military dictatorship, a remnant of a ruthless and capricious regime whose tyrannies were catalogued by both the United Nations and Amnesty International. Optimists look at the amount of investment going into Burma as evidence of improvement.

Mr. Sherwood, who has so far spent \$14 million (about £9 million) in setting up the *Road to Mandalay*, was invited by the Government to start the cruises. He is guaranteed no competition at the five-star end of the market for five years.

Naturally he takes a charitable if not Nelsonian view of the regime: "My problem is I don't know what the human rights abuses are. I haven't been able to discover them."

The generals who run the Government he describes as



Awaiting tourists: Rangoon's gilded Shwedagon pagoda

"young, very able people who seem to be totally dedicated to improving the country. Since taking over in 1989 they have maintained 8 per cent growth per annum. That is very impressive."

At 33ft, the *Road to Mandalay* is the largest vessel the Irrawaddy has ever seen. At this time of year, before the Himalayan snows melt and the river rises nearly 40ft, these are tricky waters. They may be a quarter of a mile wide, but there is only the narrowest trench deep enough for the ship's draught. She moves, therefore, unperturbedly in a series of serene zigzags like a courtly pinball following a course marked more clearly in the Burmese captain's memory than by the occasional bamboo stick. Even then the channel may have shifted when she returns upstream in a week's time. In the tightest reaches a boat is sent ahead to take soundings.

On either side the flood plain stretched flat and torpid, one moment a sort of tropical Broadlands with flashes of green paddy and stands of trees, the next a semi-desert where the river lapped broad sand beaches. A stillness settled on

the scene like haze, the only movement being the occasional slow progress of bicycles and bullock carts along the banks.

The activity was all on the water. Boats big as arks transported passengers on their upper decks, cargo below; barges loaded with reek placed men at their bows to take continuous soundings with long poles; fishing skiffs with gondola prows were skulled by men standing in the stern, oars crossed like knitting needles. At the villages, women at the water's edge bowered clean their laundry with wooden paddles before laying it to dry in lines as orderly as medal ribbons.

On the ship, a viscount, his arm unexpectedly tattooed, was in the swimming pool while Princess Michael, wearing lemon, performed ostentatious cadenzas on a laptop computer. They were on the upper observation deck, whose teak planks run almost the length of the vessel between a bar in the stern and the wheelhouse.

By day, the deck is a smart yacht-club veranda; by night, when the air is cool and the lights are soft, it's one of the best bars in Asia.

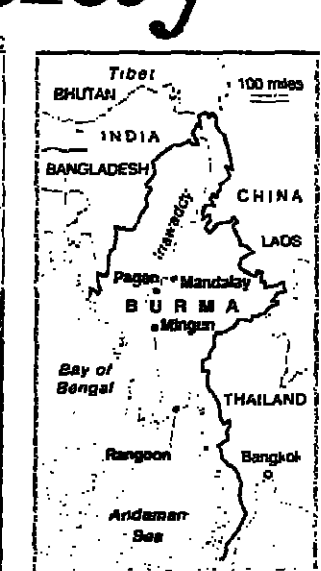
Below, in the air-conditioned, there is a piano bar and an observation lounge which becomes an auditorium when local entertainers come aboard: a folk show one night, puppeteers another. In the cabins there is monogrammed

bed linen, Penhaligon toiletries and television. If the observation areas live up to their views and the cabins to their style, the dining room hardly does credit to the food. It looks more like an Indian restaurant from a provincial high street than a place serving fashionable West End fare.

Like every other ship on the Irrawaddy, we eventually ran aground. With a soft hiss of sand beneath the keel and a gentle lurch just enough to send the water from the swimming pool sloshing over aristocratic ankles, we came to rest on a sandbank. The ship can pump water from her ballast tanks to raise herself four inches, on this occasion her power was enough to wrench herself free.

About 120 miles downstream, the cruise ended at one of the world's great archaeological sites. At Pagan (now known as Bagan) between the 11th and 13th centuries the kings of Burma indulged in a fury of temple building until the rampaging armies of Kublai Khan brought the empire to an end. More than 2,000 stupas erupt out of a dusty scrub plain, some crumbling, others restored; most no more than sacred pimple, a few the size of cathedrals.

It was in this Lost World landscape, so intense and strange, that I recalled where I had experienced similar feelings — in Egypt, and there was a boat to return to at the end of those days, too. The *Road to Mandalay* has navigated a new Nile.



Fact file

- The author was a guest of Orient Express and Thai Airways International.
- Upstream cruises from Pagan to Mandalay, including a trip to Mingun, take six nights and cost £2,110 per person sharing a state cabin; £1,450 pp in a superior cabin; single cabins £1,610. Cruises downstream take five nights and cost, respectively, £1,860, £1,230 and £1,430. Both cruises include tours of Rangoon, Mandalay and Pagan, flights from Bangkok to Burma and within Burma, transfers, a hotel and dinner in Rangoon and meals on board. Flights to Thailand, airport taxes and visa fees are not included.
- Further information from Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, Sea Containers House, 20 Upper Ground, London SE1 9PF (0171-805 5100).
- Thai Airways International flies daily from Heathrow to Bangkok from £389 return. For details, call TAI in London on 0171-499 9113; Manchester, 0161-831 7861.

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- Magic of the Orient (01293 537700) offers three-night cruises from Thailand aboard a 17-metre wooden junk. Taking in Phang Nga Bay, Sea Gipsy village, Krabi and the Phi Phi Islands, the trip costs £348 per person, based on two sharing. Departs most Saturdays and Tuesdays from Phuket. Flights not included.
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GULF OF SALERNO: In a village near the sea, Christena Appleyard discovers the elusive real Italy



The tranquil gardens and pool at the Palazzo Belmonte, once a royal hunting lodge

There is a dream of Italy that is not the clogged tourist crowds of Venice, Florence or Rome. Nor is it the pricey, rural idyll of Tuscany or the packed, burning beaches of Viareggio. Rather it is the authentic, ancient grandeur of a way of life rooted in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

In this dream old palazzos in dense woodland slumber away the centuries. Courtyards are divided into blind, sunlit and deep shadow. Inside are the accumulations of the ages — worn stone staircases, darkened wood, curious paintings that just might be lost masterpieces. Outside, gardeners tend the grounds in the intense heat. Meanwhile, lunch slides into the lengthy siesta which then, effortlessly, becomes dinner. Beyond the walls the life of an old village continues — old men sitting around the fountain, teenagers strutting and an out-of-tune church bell clanging.

This is the dream of the real Italy — seclusive, remote and replete with mysterious customs and traditions. Like every other such dream — the perfect English village, the

authentic American West, the cute pastoral story of old Provence — it is under threat. The modern world intervenes. Tourists discover these places and turn them into parodies of their past. Once known they can never be unknown again and the dream is over.

The trick is not to keep the modern world out but to control it. And that is what Angelo, the Prince Belmonte, is trying to do.

The Palazzo Belmonte is 120km south of Naples. Finding it in a hire car from Naples airport is a testing but thrilling experience. One minute you are duelling with the battered Atlas and Fiat, struggling to find your way south, the next you are curving around the huge cliffs that plunge into Salerno. And then you leave the motorway and find your-

self in a new, empty landscape dotted with small towns — Battipaglia, Agropoli and, finally, Santa Maria di Castellabate, the home of the Prince Belmonte.

Dipping down towards the sea you pass the long wall of his 17th-century palazzo: turn dangerously through its slightly too narrow gateway and there you are — the dense trees, the ancient walls, the gardeners, the lot. And later you discover that a few yards from the gate is the perfect village — old men, teenagers, life drifting by as it has done for centuries. This is Italy.

The prince, a tall, amiable, handsome figure straight out of an Italian 1950s movie, has turned his palazzo into a restrained resort. He has, wisely, tried to change as little as possible. Once it was a

hunting lodge visited by the kings of Spain and Italy. Now it is a collection of self-catering apartments visited, overwhelmingly, by the British. Angelo, the present Prince Belmonte, has kept his own quarters but divided the rest of the building and the neighbouring "Edoardo's House" into 21 separate units that can take from two to eight guests. The conversion is understated. There are no sudden intrusions of plastic or the wrong wood into the architecture.

It does, however, have all the essential resort trappings. There is a swimming pool and a beach. The pool is big enough to be fun and small enough not to dominate the grounds. The prince fights a quiet running battle to keep out Lilos and to keep the pool and all the grounds as quiet as possible during the siesta. He doesn't quite succeed, but with the small number of guests and the general air of peaceful harmony, it hardly matters. No untoward yobbery is likely to disturb the Palazzo Belmonte.

The section of beach that belongs to the prince is small and somewhat rocky. The rest of the beach runs into the village. The buildings reach down to the sand, and cafes and modest restaurants crowd around the bathers. Overall the beach is not spectacular but it is friendly. Self-catering is the idea and with the shops in Santa Maria this is simple. The palazzo does lay on meals. Dinner is worth it for the sleepy pleasure of watching the sun go down from the outside restaurant and the prince dining with his curious range of exotic guests. The food is OK and filling but not great.

All this should be enough to put you into a fairly deep trance for at least a few days. At some point, however, curiosity or curiosity should

drive you out of the immediate area. You can do this either by hire car or on private excursions arranged by the palazzo.

The first thing is to drive up the mountain behind the village. Beware the road, a long run of sharp hairpins. At the top is another village, known simply as Castellabate. This is stunning: a cluster of buildings clinging precariously to the mountain top and with views over miles of coastline.

Other trips take more planning. Paestum to the north is essential — a staggering, glorious collection of Greek temples and a wonderful museum. Then, of course, there are Pompeii and Herculaneum, the two Roman towns buried and preserved by an eruption of Vesuvius. And you can go up the volcano itself — a drive followed by a tough, steep walk but worth it. These all involve the two-hour drive back to Naples, so you need to commit a whole day for any or all of them.

Finally, there is the whole Amalfi peninsula. This is familiar holiday territory. The towns of Amalfi, Positano and Sorrento and the island of Capri are more or less fixtures on the "Romantic Italy" map. For me they are too much, too touristy, too — after Santa Maria — obvious. But they are there and all within reach.

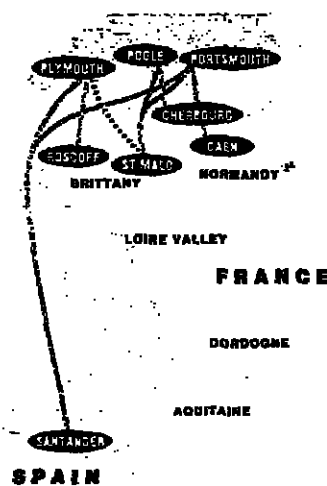
The point is that the Palazzo Belmonte is what you make it — the Italian dream or a peaceful base from which to explore the strange and extraordinary wonders of the whole of Naples and southwards.

The prince is performing a fine balancing act with his resort. It can no longer survive as a royal hunting lodge; tourism is now the economic game. He has decided to let in the tourists, but with immense care and a certain gentle authority. He complains good naturedly about any Lilos in the pool, just enough to preserve peace and decorum. And he has resisted any temptation to "do up" the place, which would destroy its strong feeling of continuity with the past.

It is a balancing act that a thousand other ancient places could copy. But they don't. They get discovered and slowly become just another stop-over on the holiday map.

Check out the Palazzo Belmonte. There are few such places left.

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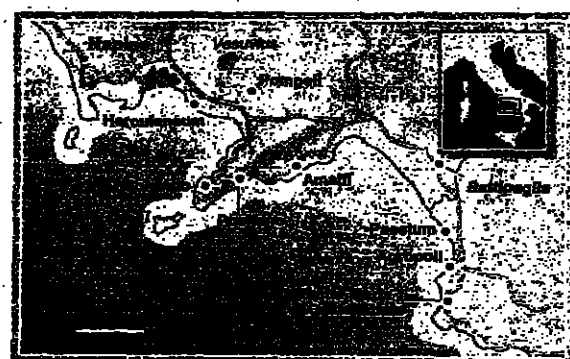
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Palazzo Belmonte fact file

□ The author was a guest of C.V. Travel, 43 Cadogan Street, London SW5 2PR (071-581 085). One week in an apartment for four people at Palazzo Belmonte in May, June or September costs from £530 per person, and from £625 up in July/August, including return flights to Naples with British Airways and transfers, but not including meals. Larger or smaller apartments are also available. Special off-season rates (May and October): four nights for the price of three, including car hire.

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• SPAIN: Memories are made of bliss in an Andalucian cortijo; and a tour of design-conscious Barcelona

Straight from the mind's eye

The hypnotist who failed to wear me off smoking began each session the same way. Picture a blissful scene, he would say: a tropical beach, perhaps, or a picnic on the river bank. But I'd take my magic carpet off to southern Spain: a white-washed courtyard with a table set under the vine, and views over tumbling terracotta roofs of blue sky and olive grove-covered hills. It was a place in the mind's eye, of course, though not far-fetched. Behind high walls and massive oak-doored gateways there are plenty of such old cortijos in Andalucia. But short of marrying one's daughter to a sherry baron or a breeder of fighting bulls, few of them are open to the mere panophile.

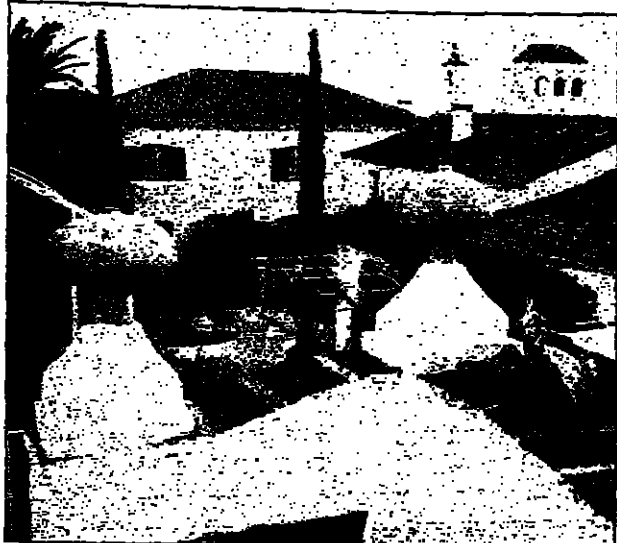
Yet here we were, on a warm October night, standing outside an iron-studded portal 20ft high set in a long white wall. An enormous dog whose ancestors must have gone into battle with El Cid ambled towards us.

Two black turkeys guarding the entrance coughed crossly at us. The scent of eucalyptus made the head swim. For centuries, one thought, dust-stained travellers had stood here just like this, sniffing the wood smoke, eyeing the mastiffs and trusting in the ancient laws of Spanish hospitality to be let in untroubled.

Sure enough, a human-sized door set into the giant-sized door opened and out came our hostess and her children in welcoming procession. On cue, Fatima wagged her tail, causing a fair-sized dust storm. There was a glimpse of white-washed walls and smooth-bellied oil-vats strewn around a cobbled courtyard. I held my breath as we went in. It would need only one wrong note — a television satellite dish or a parked scrambling bike — and I'd be back on that hypnotist's divan mistrusting my own picture of perfection (which is why I never succumbed to his droning imprecations against tobacco).

But even in the dark, Trasierra is an enchanted place. On three sides of the courtyard were dimly lit verandas. We brushed against lavender. We were shown into the Moorish Suite. There was a little hallway with a pretty chest of drawers covered in blue glass and ceramic. It opened into a high-ceilinged room with a low table laden with books. To each side was an alcove, crowded with blue and white cushions, just the spot to curl up with V.S. Pritchett and a glass of sherry. An archway led to the bedroom, lofty and cool, also blue and white. Even the floor tiles were painted white. In the bathroom I counted 11 towels. Gene Wilder slept here. So did a certain duchess, who stayed a month.

A big cortijo is almost a walled village. Cottages, kitchen, olive presses, wine cellars,



Trasierra: not the least sense of being in a hotel

ens, olive presses, wine cellars, storerooms, pot-rooms, even a chapel, all huddle round the seigneurial mansion. We had to go past the schoolroom along a tile-and-cobble lane lined with rue to reach the salon. The other guests were drinking wine in front of a fireplace the size of a small aircraft hangar, where a pyre of twisted olive wood blazed merrily. We sprawled in enormous sofas and squashy armchairs, eating home-cured olives. For the rahers hung bunches of bay and lavender.

There were nine of us at the round table, already laid with bowls of gazpacho. Charlotte Scott, Trasierra's chateleine, presided. Her children served



chicken with olives and capers and poured the rijo. By the time coffee came, no one could have imagined that just an hour or two earlier most of us had been strangers to each other. One might not have gone to bed at all that night but for the lure of the Moorish Suite and the prospect of seeing Trasierra by daylight in the morning.

We woke to the tinkling of sheep-bells outside the window. The sun was climbing over the sierra, bathing the roofs of the cortijo and the copes of cork and quince outside its walls in lemon light. A score of white doves strutted around the bell tower. Two smiling maids were heading across the courtyard with coffee and fresh loaves. "Buenos dias, señora. Buenos dias, señor." Plainly, the enchantment was to last.

I would guess that Trasierra has had much the same effect

on its visitors for all the 500 years of its existence. But undoubtedly the most potent ingredient has been provided by Ms Scott. She is the Prospero of this place. Not only is she serenely beautiful (her sister is the actress Harriet Walter), she also has an unerring eye for beauty. Not a water bottle, door handle, fruit bowl or claw-footed bath seems to have been chosen without care. She does things with straw hats and raffia shopping bags that the editor of Interiors would die for.

The effect is not chi-chi but emphatic. It is the outcome of an authentic love affair with Spain. Such was her besottedness with the country that the young and pregnant Charlotte dragged her husband out to Andalucia in 1979. They bought the near ruins of Trasierra and began the 12-year task of restoring it, thereby providing a glorious employment boom for the builders and craftsmen of nearby Cazalla de la Sierra.

Gioconda, 16, was born in Seville, as were her three siblings. They were lucky it was in a hospital and not a ditch, says Charlotte, so slow was the 50-mile journey to the city in those days — which is why the local taxi drivers are adept midwives. (These days you can do it in an hour.) Now Gioconda is off to study mosaic-work in the city, leaving Jackson, George and Amber to wait at table and dance sevillanas after supper.

With her husband gone, Charlotte runs the place as a kind of upmarket guesthouse. Apart from keeping note of the number of flos you drink between meals, you haven't



The painter's patio, where guests work with the tutor on still-lives and portraits

the smallest sense of being in a hotel. There is a heavenly swimming pool. The tennis court is set among olive and sweet chestnut trees. You can ride for miles through mountain and ravine on dappled Andalucian ponies. Or stroll into the little town of Cazalla for tapas of fried squid and anchovies in garlic. But the house speciality is the painting course — and while we were there, a writing course as well.

Though no artist, I could see those who were — or wanted to be — enjoying themselves hugely. The tutor was a West Country man, Robert Tildard. He is an uncannily good portraitist and patient teacher. Each morning he would post himself on a pretty patio which he shared with a tame black rabbit and picturesque objects such as Ali Baba oil jars, a crumbling archway and a balcony straight out of

Carmen. Here his students would work conscientiously until lunch — and sometimes after. Novice Jo from the BBC produced sparkling still-lives of bottles. Eva, a parrot-fancier from Sweden, painted an astonishing portrait of my wife. Warwick from Sheffield worked grimly on a study of chairs.

Meanwhile, Angela Huth, the novelist and playwright, was to be found on an adjacent terrace conducting a seminar on opening sentences. The subjects were show, an interview with Margaret Thatcher and a travel piece about Trasierra. Nina had a cool line on snow. Charlotte was perceptive about the powdery quality of Baroness T. Claudia and her husband Freddy, a Gibraltar MP, read out their

homework, which they had dashed from the tennis court to complete.

And I, with this article in mind, bent an ear in the hope of learning how to describe this delectable place without sounding intoxicated. A hard task. If I see my hypnotist again he will have no trouble in transporting me blisswards. Then, maybe, next time I won't return from Trasierra with a reeking carton of duty-free Habanos.

TREVOR GROVE

● The author was a guest of Trasierra, Cazalla de la Sierra, 41500 Sevilla, Spain. (00 34 54 88 43 24). Weekly rates with a course are £800, including food, wine and tuition. For non-students, £600. Contact Charlotte Scott.

● Direct return flights to Seville with Iberia cost from £175.

Madrid offer, page 8

Art pays homage to Catalonia

The most stylish person I saw in Barcelona — the shrine of modern urban design — was a cleaner in the city's new Museum of Contemporary Art. In a geometric world of glass and granite, where even waste bins look like exhibits, the cleaner, wearing a black and white uniform, mopped at white walls and black floors with a white cloth wrung from a black bucket of white suds.

Entering the building, the visitor too feels drawn into an aesthetic realm. Wandering through its sinuous spaces is like being lost inside the labyrinths of a painting by Léger, or within the transparent volumes of some machine-age sculpture.

Richard Meier, the museum's American architect, describes his new creation — which, after numerous delays, has finally opened its doors this year — as a "cathedral of our time". It is one of Barcelona's most important cultural assets in recent years. There are more than 1,000 works of art in the museum's permanent collection, including pieces by Alexander Calder, Paul Klee and Joan Miró. In a pearly light, filtered through opalescent blinds, every line and texture, every curve and hollow, seems sculpted out of luminous space. Quartzite stars glitter in pale granite. Touches of colour gleam succulently against the pristine whiteness of the walls.

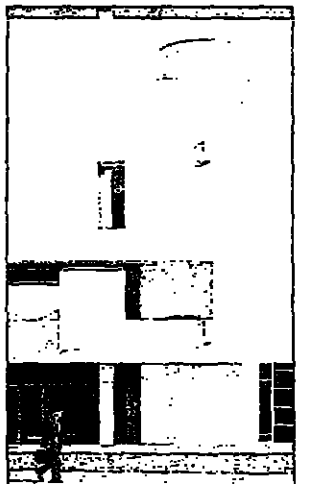
Meier's building typifies a brave spirit of experimentalism which has flourished in Barcelona since the late 1900s when modernism, Catalonia's outlandish version of Art Nouveau, became prominent. This was followed by various avant-garde movements which established Barcelona as one of the most visually exciting cities in Europe.

The streets flaunt their prodigies. There is, of course, Gaudi's unfinished fantasy, the Sagrada Família, a spiny echinoderm of a building — "the sum total conscience of our perversions", as Salvador Dalí described it. In an area known as the Quadrat d'Or (The Golden Square) more than 100 modernist structures crowd, including the Casa Batlló with its surging walls and jaw-like balconies, and Domènech's Casa Lleó Morera, with its fanciful tiled cupolas and corner spires.

But Barcelona also has a far more ancient artistic legacy —

one which stretches back to Roman times. The visitor, gliding up the ramps into the upper galleries of the Museum of Contemporary Art, can look out over the skyline of an antique city. The contrast could hardly be more marked. The medieval area known as the Barri Gòtic is a warren of dark, narrow streets.

Around the soaring arches of the Gothic cathedral side chapels cage the effigies of some of Europe's most exotic saints. Grubby geese ruffle feathers in courtyards and, from iron balconies, canaries sing among pot plants and flapping washing. Even the cafes and restaurants seem steeped in this city's artistic heritage. Els Quatre Gats in the Carrer de Montsió is the tavern where



Barcelona's Museum of Contemporary Art

the young Picasso used to eat. Seaford in Barcelona is renowned. "There isn't a fish in the ocean that doesn't fly the red and yellow colours of our national flag," the waiter told me. On my companion's plate a lobster tumbled apart amid a bed of shellfish, and my order was brought to the table still baking in a flame-licked case of salt. When it comes to eating in Barcelona it is fortunate that they pay as much attention to content as to style.

RACHEL CAMPBELL-JOHNSTON

● The author was a guest of Time Off (0171-235 8070). Two-night breaks to Barcelona, including flight and accommodation, from £224 per person. British Airways return flights to Barcelona start at £199. Single rooms at the Hotel Meson Castille (00 343 318 21 83) are about £35, double £45.

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And calm of mind all passion spent JOHN MILTON

That was only after Samson had cracked the temple's columns and brought the whole caboodle tumbling down on himself.

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Roam Ireland from £81

Ireland has to be one of the most beautiful places to go touring. And while you're there, enjoy two nights' bed & breakfast in a country house or farmhouse from £81.

*Based on 2 adults sharing, 1 Jan - 25 May '96
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ABTA NO 1946 ATOL NO 305

£10,000 of weekend breaks to be won

Treat yourself and your partner to a weekend of luxury that need not break the bank.

The Times, with Queens Moat Houses Hotels, is offering readers the choice of two weekend break packages at the hotels listed in the grid below, where two people can stay for two nights and enjoy 50 per cent off.

The first of our offers, the luxury weekend break, is available at 27 hotels, and includes dinner and breakfast, in the best room available. On arrival a bottle of champagne, fresh flowers, fruit and chocolates will be in your room. The 50 per cent discount prices start at £130 per couple for the weekend.

Our second offer, the bonus weekend break, can be taken at one of the 33 Queens Moat Houses Hotels in England, Wales and Scotland. Prices start at £54 per couple for two nights and includes breakfast.

These offers must be taken before Sunday, May 5, 1996. The prices listed are all for two people for two nights.

Win one of 60 weekend breaks

We also have 20 luxury weekend breaks for you to win and 40 bed and breakfast breaks to give readers as prizes.

You can choose your prize from any of the hotels listed and take it anytime up to August 31, 1996 on the same terms and conditions as our 50 per cent luxury weekend break offer.

HOW TO ENTER

Simply answer the following question and ring our hotline: 0891 40 50 04

How many Queens Moat Houses Hotels are there in the UK?

The first 20 correct entries chosen at random will win the luxury break and the next 40 will win the bed and breakfast break. The phone line will be open until midnight on Monday, February 19, 1996.

CALL OUR HOTLINE 0891 40 50 04

Calls cost 39p per minute (cheap rate) and 44p per minute at other times.



Oakley Court Hotel, Windsor, where you can take a weekend break for £106 per couple for two nights, or the luxury break, including dinner, champagne, chocolates, fruit and fresh flowers, for £215

HOW TO BOOK

Call, at local rate, QUEENS LINE UK Reservations on: 0645 11 33 11

(8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm at weekends) quoting The Times and specifying whether you want the Luxury Weekend Offer or The Times Bonus Weekend Offer.

These offers are valid for a stay of two consecutive nights, of which one must be a Saturday, except at The Royal Crescent Hotel, Bath, and Billiesley Manor, near Stratford-upon-Avon, which are only available for midweek breaks from Sunday to Thursday. This applies to both the luxury weekend break and the bonus weekend break.

Both offers are subject to availability and valid until May 5, 1996. Queens Moat Houses Hotels' usual booking conditions apply.

Location	Hotel	Bonus £	Luxury £	Location	Hotel	Bonus £	Luxury £	Location	Hotel	Bonus £	Luxury £
LONDON/ESSEX	Drury Lane Moat House	130	198	Northampton	Westone Hotel	68		Winchester	Winchester Moat House	70	
Covent Garden	Covent Garden Moat House	102		Nottingham	Nottingham Moat House	59		Blackburn	Blackburn Moat House	62	
South Kensington	Norfolk Hotel	118	190	Oxford	Nottingham Royal Moat House	94	165	Bolton	Bolton Moat House	66	
Chelsea	St James Square Moat House	118		Oxford	Prince Rupert Hotel	76	140	Bramhall	Bramhall Moat House	68	
Harrow	Epping Forest Moat House	60		Salisbury	Salisbury Moat House	78	140	Chester	Chester Moat House	104	170
Epping Forest	Harrow Moat House	56		Stoke on Trent	Stoke on Trent Moat House	74		Darlington	Blackwell Grange Hotel	94	170
Harlow	Harlow Moat House	56		Stourport	County Hotel	74		Doncaster	Doncaster Moat House	72	
Southend	Stifford Moat House	60		Stratford-upon-Avon	Charlesworth Pheasant Country Hotel, near Stratford	152	225	Hampstead	Hampstead Moat House	72	130
Thurrock/Lakeside					Falcon Hotel	82		Liverpool	Liverpool Moat House	76	
HOME COUNTIES					Stratford Moat House	96	175	Manchester	Manchester Airport Moat House	68	
Ashford	Ashford International Hotel	84		Telford	Telford Golf & Country Moat House	84	140	Newcastle	Europa Hotel	78	
Burnham	Burnham Beeches Hotel	92	155		Telford Moat House	72		Newcastle Airport Moat House	Holiday Inn	76	130
Dover	County Hotel	80						Rotherham	Carlton Park Hotel	68	
Elstree	Elstree Moat House	84						Sheffield	Sheffield Moat House	74	140
Gatwick	Gatwick Moat House	70						Washington	Washington Moat House	68	
Harpender	Harpender House Hotel	70	135					Wigan	Wigan/Standish Moat House	80	
Hemel Hempstead	Hemel Hempstead Moat House	56						York	York Viking Moat House	116	180
Reading	Holiday Inn	70	130								
St Albans	Reading Moat House	70									
Shepperton	Hertfordshire Moat House	68									
Stevenage	Hertfordshire Moat House	54									
Ware	Cromwell Hotel	56									
Walford	Briggs House Hotel	90	145								
Windsor	County Hotel	60									
	Dean Park Hotel	58									
	Oakley Court Hotel	106	215								
HEART OF ENGLAND											
Bedford	County Hotel	56									
Birmingham	Grand Hotel	74									
Cheltenham/Glos	Birmingham/West Bromwich M/H	62									
Leicester	Cheltenham/Gloucester Moat House	78	145								
Northampton	Hermitage Hotel	56									
	Northampton Moat House	68									

TO BOOK CALL 0645 11 33 11
Sun 8.30pm Mon-Fri 9am-4.30pm at weekends

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no more rushing to beat closing time

Not all banks are the same, it really is worth considering making a change. First Direct set out to change the face of banking in 1989. We were committed to providing a service that enabled customers to arrange their banking around their lives, on their terms. We had the benefit of starting with a clean slate rather than being shackled by hundreds of years of history. We recognised that bank closing times were a source of bitter frustration, so we are open every hour of every day of the year.

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manage your money your way

Because banking is easier with First Direct, managing your finances becomes much less of a chore. Many of our customers find that just a three minute call each month is all it takes.

With every First Direct Cheque Account comes the First Direct Card, which guarantees cheques for up to £100. Your Card also allows you to withdraw up to £500 daily from the cash machines of Midland, NatWest, TSB, Clydesdale, Northern and the Royal Bank of Scotland. Your Card also allows you to pay by Switch.


benefit from free banking, even if you are overdrawn

Incurring punitive bank charges for going a few pounds overdrawn seems as nonsensical to us as it does to you. That's why at First Direct there are no charges for writing cheques, standing orders, direct debits and cash machine withdrawals, even if your account is overdrawn. You also get an automatic overdraft facility of up to £250 free of any arrangement fees, to help with monthly budgeting. All you pay is a competitive rate of interest on the precise amount you borrow.

Changing your bank is far easier than you might expect.

Now it really is worthwhile because First Direct has changed banking for good.

The time is right. Call us now on

 **0800 24 24 24**

*Survey undertaken by NOP Market Research among 1,000 randomly selected current account customers. Interviews were conducted by telephone between 31 October 1994 and 15 November 1994. Enquirers must be aged 18 or over. In order to safeguard our customers, certain transactions may require written confirmation. First Direct reserves the right to decline to open an account for you. Before agreeing to lend you money we will want to make sure you can afford the repayments. For written details of our services write to First Direct, Freepost HK16, Leeds, LS98 2RS. First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc, a member of SFA. AL/68

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Post to: First Direct, Freepost HK 16, Leeds, LS98 2RS. (no stamp needed) to receive more information on First Direct.

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms or Title

Forename(s)

Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone (inc. std)

Ian Francis enjoys his breakfast and settles his Visa bill.

Jake O'Sullivan teases his mother as she asks about her mortgage.

Yeboah opens the scoring, Andy Smith celebrates and raises his overdraft.

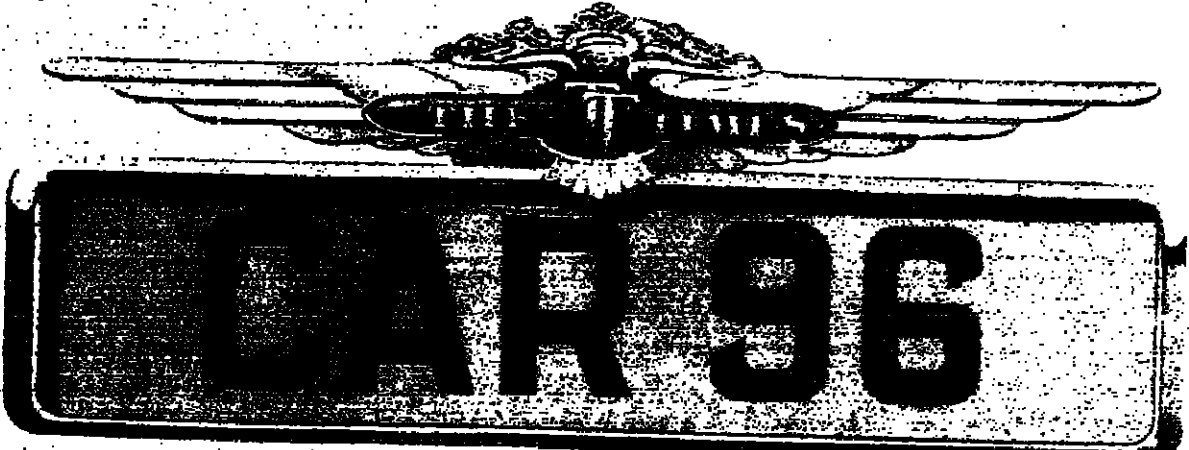
Bob Sparks wakes with a start and calls to pay his gas bill.

مركز امان للتصلي



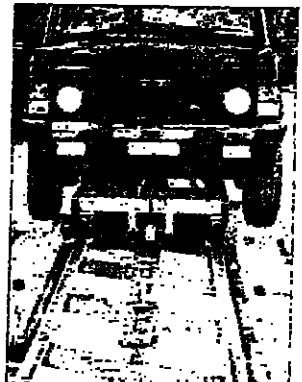
A secret blonde in the life of radio's 'villain'

Page 9



Classic Range Rover runs out of road

Page 10



SATURDAY FEBRUARY 17 1996

How the car became a film star

Alan Copps discovers the joys of driving the magical Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

It was a bit like discovering rather late in life that Father Christmas really exists: I pushed the gear selector gently forward, let out the clutch and nosed out on to the road... at the wheel of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

It, as so many believe, the British have a love affair with the motor car then perhaps this is where it all begins. Films seen in childhood, in which the car is as much a character as the people, from the sentimentality of *Genevieve* and the *Yellow Rolls-Royce* to the macho exploits of James Bond or *Judge Dredd*. Chitty may be more than 30 years old and a lot of rarer rivals have come and gone, but it obviously keeps its place in children's affection. The film is regularly on the list of the ten most pirated videos, an accolade many directors would die for.

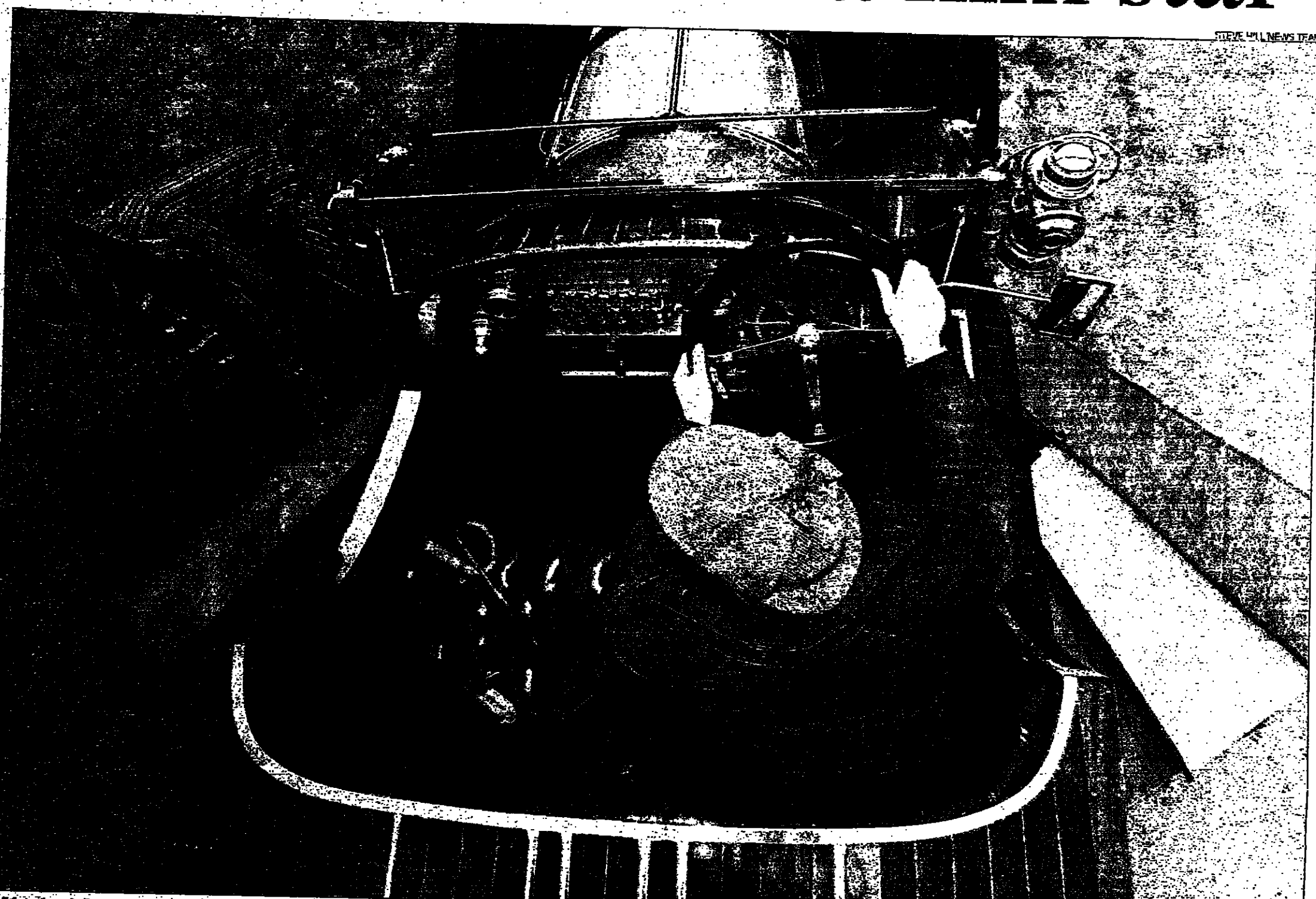
This year not only marks the centenary of the British motor industry but also the 100th anniversary of the cinema, and the two have been linked throughout their histories. The great joy of star cars is that almost all of them are real road-going vehicles — unlike starships, planes and even castles which are so often stage sets simply to be demolished as soon as their images are committed to celluloid.

This is a point made by Ken Adams, designer of this Chitty. I was driving, whose long film career has encompassed cars and many other props and was capped last year by winning an Oscar for the set of *The Madness of King George*. "If you put a car in a film, it simply has to be real. It is so easy to spot a model. But Chitty was one I found extremely difficult, and so did Pinewood at that time."

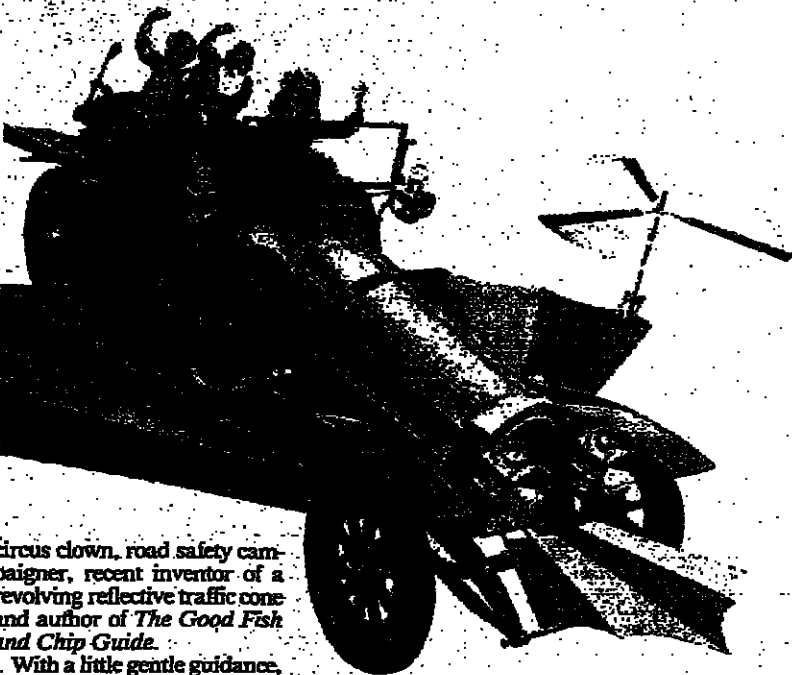
"I liked the idea of a body like a boat and the bonnet of a Bugatti. I built a plywood mock-up, but it was a long time before I got it right. Ford supplied the chassis and the driving unit. The work was done by Alan Mann, the specialist who had prepared their GT40 race cars for Le Mans. We had a lot of fun on that picture. For the water sequences we had another car which we mounted on two powerboats and there was a full-scale model for the flying."

I found Chitty Chitty Bang Bang in Warwickshire — complete with boat tail, folding wings and lovingly polished snakeshead horn. I was guiding its 17-foot length past Anne Hathaway's cottage in Shottery just outside Stratford-upon-Avon. It's been on the road since the film was finished and bears the registration GEN 11, the nearest they could get at the time to Genevieve, to express the magic of it all.

Sitting beside me doing his best impression of Professor Potts was the owner of this fabulous beast, Pierre Picton.



With a chassis from a Ford van, boat tail from a Thames skiff builder and folding wings — demonstrated to Alan Copps at the wheel by Pierre Picton — Chitty can't fly but has carried a lot of brides and grooms



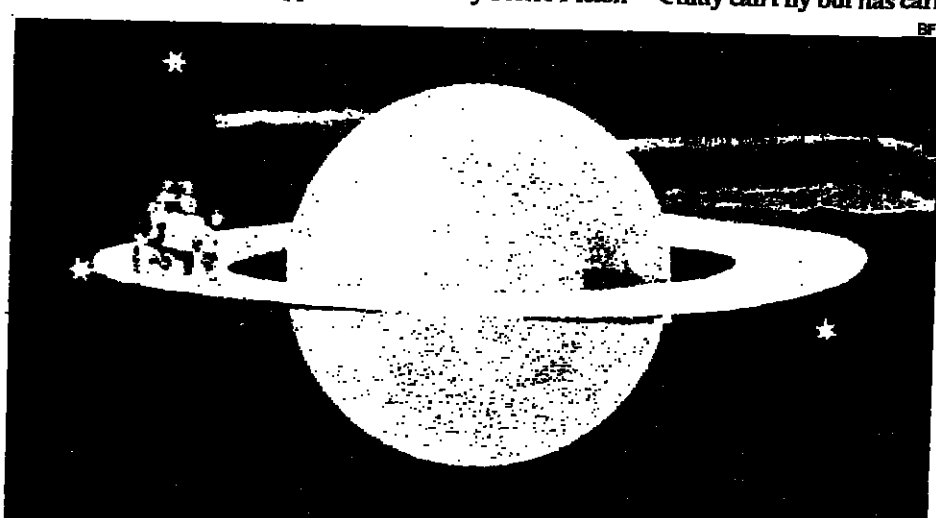
circus clown, road safety campaigner, recent inventor of a revolving reflective traffic cone and author of *The Good Fish and Chip Guide*.

With a little gentle guidance, Chitty proved surprisingly easy to drive. An early Ford V6 engine takes up only a small portion of that bonnet that stretches into the distance but makes a wonderfully convincing noise — this car, after all, originally took its name from a Brooklands special of the most fearsome multi-litred breed.

The Ford van chassis was extended at the front to mount the axle between two authentically cart-like leaf springs. It also uses a Borg-Warner semi-automatic gearbox of the type found in vans, which is a great asset because the absence of gears allows the driver to

concentrate on steering — and that needs some concentration, the technique resembling that of steering a boat.

The beautifully finished boat tail came from a Thames skiff builder, the instruments and aluminium dash from an aircraft, headlamps and snake-



Special effects: Chitty in flight and a car on the rings of Saturn in the 1966 film *The Motorist*

horn from some unidentified veteran and the burnished brass oil reservoir just in front of the outside handbrake from an early Rolls-Royce.

The car makes regular appearances at shows and is much in demand for weddings during the summer. Its most strikingly modern touch is the seatbelts, essential since most of its passengers tend to be on the young side.

But Chitty is not the only piece of auto-film history that

Pierre Picton has preserved. His other car is a Laurel and Hardy Model T Ford, the sort where the doors fall off and the back collapses at the touch of a hidden lever. It's a runner, but can't be registered for road use. It was bought from a Hollywood studio, one of several specially adapted for the two funny men and has been in Pierre's possession since becoming his chief prop during his time as a clown in Bertram Mills circus in the

1950s. (The first *Fish and Chip Guide* was compiled from tastings he made while the circus was on the road.)

His cars are important links in a chain of star cars which span the history of the cinema. One of the first films made by the British cinema pioneer Cecil Hepworth in 1900 was *Exploits of a Motor Car*, and another early British effort, *The Automobile Accident* made by Robert Paul, featured some of the first special effects,

resulting in a scene where a pedestrian's legs are gruesomely severed by a passing car. By 1906 special effects were sophisticated enough for Georges Méliès to show cinemagoers a car driving round one of the rings of Saturn in his film *The Motorist*.

Since then things have progressed to where carmakers fight for the opportunity to take a starring role in big budget movies. James Bond's transfer of allegiance to a BMW Z3 in *Goldeneye* is worth millions in publicity to the German maker. Aston Martin made the switch from small UK sports car maker to international name thanks to the same hero's use of a DB5. A car complete with all the *Goldfinger* gadgets is on permanent display at the Cornish Goldsmiths' showroom in Portreath.

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, of course, came from the pen of Bond's creator, Ian Fleming, a great motoring buff, who named it after the 18-litre Brooklands special driven by Count Louis Zborowski in the 1930s. The only disappointment is that when you extend the wings it doesn't fly.

Which will you choose? New, or timeless?



Mercedes-Benz Used Cars

For more information, call 0800 010107

AA GRIDLOCK GUIDE

● LONDON
A40 Western Avenue, Acton. Major roadworks with contra-flow between Hilary Road in Acton and the Northern roundabout in White City.
A406 North Circular Road, Upper Edmonston. Major roadworks continue over the Lea Valley Viaduct.
A406 North Circular Road, Finchley. Major roadworks continue with various restrictions between the A1 and A1000 junctions.
A12 Eastern Avenue, Wansford. Construction of the M11 link road continues, with east-bound down to a single lane between the Redbridge roundabout and High Street.
A6 Great West Road, Chiswick. Between 6pm and 6am Monday-Thursday nights reduced to one lane each way for repairs to the elevated section of the M4 above.

● SOUTH-EAST
M4 Berkshire. Major roadworks and contraflow between junctions 6 and 8/9 cause lengthy tailbacks.
M25 Hertfordshire. Both anti-clockwise and clockwise exit sliproads are closed overnight at junction 24 for major repair work.
M25 Surrey. Two sections of widening work, with lane closures and contraflows, between junctions 6 and 8 and junctions 9 and 10.
A509 Buckinghamshire. Major roadworks on the Wellingborough Road in Olney, at junction with Lavendon Road.
A27 East Sussex. Major roadworks at Fife, between Selmeaton and Lewes, with temporary lights.
A249 Kent. Major works at the Stockbury roundabout west of Sittingbourne often cause lengthy hold-ups between the M2 and Kingsferry Bridge.

● SOUTH-WEST
M4/M5 Avon. Work on the second Severn crossing continues, with restrictions around the Almondsbury & Aust interchanges, and also on the M5 around junction 18.
M32 Avon. Contraflow for major roadworks between junctions 1 and 2. The Southbound entry slip at junction 1, is also closed off peak.
A4 Avon. Lane restrictions and temporary lights over the Newbridge Bridge, Bath.
A40 Gloucestershire. Golden Valley Bypass (between Gloucester and Cheltenham) reduced to a single lane each way over junction 11 of the M5. Due to end February 18.
A30 Cornwall. Roadworks and contraflow near Bolventer, on Bodmin Moor.

● MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA
M6 West Midlands. Major roadworks continue between junctions 5 and 6 with lane restrictions in both directions.
A377 Devon. Roadworks continue around Eggesford, between Exeter and Barnstaple, with temporary lights.

● NORTH
M1 Leicestershire. Final stages of major roadworks underway, with lane restrictions in both directions between junctions 21 and 22.
A563 Leicestershire. Roadworks and contraflow on Lubbershorpe Way, Leicester between the Dumbell Island and the A47 Hinckley Road junction.
A1 Nottinghamshire. Roadworks on the Apley Head roundabout near Worksop (junction with the A57 and A614) cause peak-time delays.
A47 Norfolk. Two sets of major roadworks: at Terrington St John and at Swaffham.
A11 Norfolk. Construction of Wymondham bypass continues, with lane and speed restrictions between Hethersett and Attleborough.
M6 Staffordshire. North and southbound entry sliproads on to motorway closed at junction 11 for work on the A460.

● NORTH
M1 West Yorkshire. Roadworks and contraflow at end of motorway at junction 47.
M6 Cheshire. Widening work continues between junctions 20 and 21.
M6 Greater Manchester. Roadworks and lane closures between junctions 24 and 26. M6 Lancashire. Lane closures in both directions between junctions 28 and 31 for work on the A65 extension.
A5063 Greater Manchester. Major roadworks and lane closures on Trafford Road near junction with Pomona Strand.
A530 South Yorkshire. Major roadworks and contraflow on the Rotherway at Cawthorpe, between junction 33 of the M1 and Rotherham.
A167M Tyne-side. Northbound lane closures on the Newcastle Central Motorway near Jesmond Road interchange.

● WALES
M4 Gwent. Widening work continues in connection with second Severn crossing between junctions 22 and 24.
A48 West Glamorgan. Construction work with lane closures on all approaches to the Wychyford roundabout at Morriston.
A483 West Glamorgan. Major roadworks and contraflow on Fabian Way, Swansea between Elba Crescent and Earlswood traffic lights.
A4229 Mid Glamorgan. Roadworks and temporary lights between Cornelly and Porthcawl.
A547 Gwynedd. Bridge repairs with temporary lights near A55 junction at Llandudno Junction.
● SCOTLAND
M8 Strathclyde. Roadworks with lane closures in both directions between junctions 26 and 27.
A749 Strathclyde. Dalmahock Bridge, Glasgow closed southbound for repairs.
M90 Tayside. Major roadworks at junction 10 with lane closures in both directions.

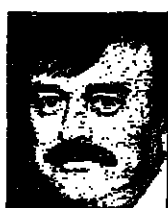
You must remember this, a kiss is still a kiss, a car is still a car... unless, of course, it's in a television commercial

Don't ask how much, this is art

Television commercials for cars used to be straightforward. A man (it was usually a man) stood in front of a car and told us what it would do, what features it had and how much it cost. We the customers understood these commercials, so naturally they had to be thrown away.

In their stead came a new breed. These are in part the product of the modern education system, particularly the fashion for going to university to read "media studies". Media studies is a subject that often involves making videos, with the result that thousands of people started to leave university calling themselves film makers. Out in the real world, they found that there were a limited number of films to be made — and Quentin Tarantino was making nearly all of them anyway. But this didn't matter, because advertising agencies were paying more and more attention to their "creative directors". Interesting words, those, which imply artistic flair and corporate responsibility, as well they might. There is nothing a

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



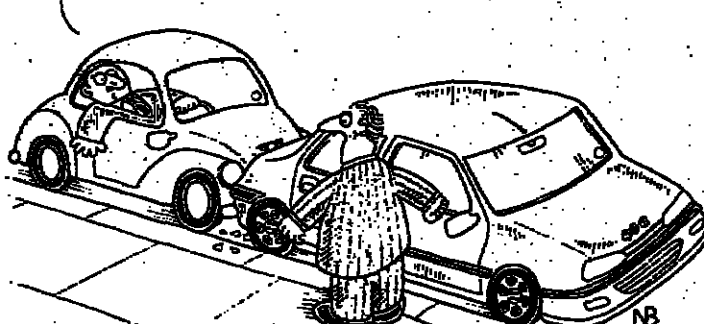
Peter Barnard

creative director enjoys more than to be thought creative while earning an astronomical salary.

Thus there was a coming together of creative people who enjoyed expensive restaurants, and creative graduates waiting for Tarantino to fall under a limousine. The result is Papa and Nicole, stars of the Renault Clio commercials in which virtually nothing is learnt about the car except what it looks like.

Not to be outdone by Renault,

SORRY - I WAS SEARCHING FOR THE HERO INSIDE MYSELF



French rivals Peugeot made a colossal success of the 405 by setting light to a sugar plantation — or rather a model of one behind a model car — to the strains of "Take My Breath Away".

Now Peugeot has moved on, as you will have read in this and every other newspaper. The company's latest commercial, for the 406, is some kind of lifestyle piece of nonsense aimed at suggesting that if you buy the car you prove you are

not an average person. The result was first shown in the middle of News at Ten, but the commercial itself was already news. There were hints that the 406 ad showed the first homosexual kiss in the history of television advertising.

I cannot claim to be very well-versed in the techniques of the homosexual kiss, but I cannot think that it routinely involves one man bending over another and squeezing the second man's nostrils together

while their lips meet. I think this is something more likely to be found in a St John Ambulance manual than Gay News. I think it's the kiss of life.

Somebody at Peugeot coyly admitted in the lower reaches of the pre-commercial hype that the encounter "might be seen" as the kiss of life. But whether it is that, or a homosexual kiss, or a dentist extracting someone's teeth by using his own is not really the point. The point is that the 406 commercial is entirely consistent with that for the 405 — it tells us absolutely nothing about the car.

Now comes another trend: the commercial whose style debunks other commercials. The one for the Mitsubishi Carisma starts conventionally, with countryside backdrops and funky music, but a voiceover gradually removes the backdrop, the music and the fancy photography, leaving just the car.

This would be a welcome trend, where it not for two things. First, we learn no more about the Carisma than we do about the 406, the 405 and the Clio. Second, the deliberate mis-spelling of "charisma" is part of another distressing trend, that which encourages illiteracy.

At least it can be said that Mitsubishi is slowly moving the car commercial towards a time when it may consist of information rather than fancy images. Next thing you know, we shall see a man in front of a car telling us some facts...



A Mazda grille and a few creases on the bonnet are virtually all that separate the new 121 from the Ford Fiesta

Different name, yet essentially the same

Edward Francis on a model from Dagenham with an identity crisis

The Mazda 121 has not exactly caused a riot in Britain. The first (1988-91), a routine but overpriced super-mini notable for a huge fabric sun-roof option, is now available as the Kia Pride. The second (1991-95) was a blob-shaped car, small and tall, available only with automatic transmission, and again pricey.

Both were little more than a marketing gesture from a firm constrained by trading quotas, and Mazda understandably preferred to make up its numbers with larger and more profitable models. So the 121 sold in a dribble, reaching a total of only 2,500.

Now Mazda is poised to get serious about the B-segment. Its third 121, being built in Dagenham for an April launch, is a thinly-disguised version of the top-selling Fiesta, which led the January best-sellers and is in such demand that production of some Mazda versions has been delayed. No newcomer could have a more propitious provenance.

Why Ford and Dagenham? Ford owns 25 per cent of Mazda, the two share technologies worldwide, and Mazda makes Ford-badged cars for Pacific Rim markets, so a working arrangement is well established.

Mazda needed a European manufacturing base to stay in step with its Japanese rivals, and Britain is a prime location for such a base. Mazda also needed a proper B-segment platform, and Dagenham is Ford's lead plant for Fiesta. The production of the 121 at Dagenham appears to have been inevitable, and Mazda people have murmured that success could imply Escorts from Halewood with the Mazda badge.

From Ford's point of view, Dagenham's importance will be enhanced — even though no more jobs are involved — by the production of 25,000 121s a year alongside the Fiesta. This will carry Dagenham production over the 200,000-a-year

MAZDA 121

Engines: 16-valve, 1.25-litre petrol producing 75ps, 1.3-litre petrol producing 60ps, 1.8-litre diesel producing 60ps
Transmission: 5-speed manual or variable automatic
Performance: 1.25-litre, 0-60mph in 12.0 secs, max 107mph; 1.3-litre, 0-60mph in 15.7 secs, max 99mph; diesel, 0-60 in 15.6 secs, max 97mph
Economy: Euro cycle, 1.25-litre 43mpg; 1.3-litre 43.4mpg; diesel 49.2mpg
Equipment: power steering, immobiliser, side protection bars, driver's airbag, deadlocks
Prices: 1.3 GXi three-door £7885; 1.25 ZXi three-door £9485; five-door £9940; 1.8 DXi three-door £8340

mark, the highest in modern times.

So, if the new Mazda 121 is all about modern industrial tactics, how will it fare against its own sibling? It will appeal (say those murmurers) to motorists who fancy a Fiesta but do not want to the blue oval badge. Of the annual Dagenham output, at least 5,000 will sell in Britain and the rest in EU markets.

Several customer targets have been identified — those to be won over from other makes, owners of previous 121 models, previous 323 owners, young first-time buyers and those who run bigger Mazdas and need second cars.

Buying Mazda (£7,885 to £10,895) instead of Fiesta (£7,145 to £10,630), including a lower order old-style Classic range still built in Spain, will mean a different grille, a couple of creases in the bonnet, side rubbing strips, a rear hatch strip, power steering in every model and a three-year warranty. It also means a friendly local Mazda dealer instead of a friendly Ford one, although Mazda's 155-strong network compares poorly — as does everyone else's — with Ford's 1,000 outlets.

In on-the-road terms, the differences between the 121 and Fiesta are negligible, something openly welcomed by Mazda since the Fiesta in the substantially revised form launched at the London Motor Show last October has been widely praised for intrinsic and dynamic improvements.

The 121 benefits, therefore, from a comely combination of a familiar shape enhanced by additional curves, including fashionably tumescent bumpers and headlamps that are no longer almond-eyed. The almond era persists inside however, with carefully integrated oval styling to many control area features. Despite this

observance, instruments are conventional and controls simple and handy.

The first 121s to emerge have the 1.25-litre "Zetec" light alloy unit with 16 valves, double overhead camshaft, emissions that meet forthcoming limits, low maintenance schedules and new mountings to isolate the engine from the body.

Reving up to 6,500rpm and not sounding stressed even then, this 75ps engine provides 0-30mph in 3.5 seconds and 0-60 in 12.0 seconds, although 50mph in second gear and 80 in third are a better indication of how the car can hold its own.

On the motorway, 70mph cruising involves 3,400rpm in fifth, at which point the engine is unheard above the ever-moderate wind and road noise. Indicated maximum in fourth is 104mph, in fifth 106. The Eurocycle petrol consumption is 42.8mpg. Ride is not the most refined in this class but still comfortable. If a touch bouncy over poor surfaces, the suspension rounds off ruts quite effectively and does not remark the lighter elastic steering offers negligible feedback and the hurrying driver can sweep through the bends with confidence. A fast, vicious corner should provoke no more than a squawk of rubber.

Beverley Golden with the antis

Beaulieu's shrine to the motor car sees the vote go against it

JONATHAN PORRITT, former Director of Friends of the Earth, is frank if nothing else. He had arrived at the National Motor Museum in Beaulieu, Hampshire, to take a stand against the automobile in a debate entitled "Have we gone too far in the car?"

He began with an admission: he had been driven to Beaulieu, and earlier that day had visited the protesters campaigning against the Newbury bypass. He had gone there by car, too. It reinforced his point: we have become over-dependent on the car and given it a psychological stranglehold over us.

As he did not own a car he was constantly reminded that "I am inadequate — although, looking at the size of the car bonnets in the museum here, I wonder about the adequacy of the people who drove them," he said. "We have to accept that pedestrians and cyclists are real human beings." It was not until 1994 that "the DoT at last admitted that walking was a mode of transport".

Nor was Porritt content to accept manufacturers' efforts to make cars more environmentally friendly. "Every year 40 million cars roll off the production line. By the year 2003 or 2004 there will be 1 billion cars on planet Earth," he warned. What he had seen at Newbury "brought me up against a surreal world" which he described as "the last throes of the road dinosaur".

Graham Carter, Director of the Countryside Education Trust, reminded the audience that traffic problems have been around for a very long time. Even the Romans knew of them, he said quoting from Julius Caesar: "All night I could not sleep for the sound of traffic".

The case for bypasses was put by Neil Johnson, Chief Executive of the RAC, who said he walked to work. He added that Britain had the worst record of improving roads in Europe. He thought bypasses relieved hard-pressed communities and he moaned the fact that the Government had just removed 22 bypasses from the roads programme.

The debate coincided with the launch of a campaign by the RAC and AA for motorists to be told just how much of the taxes they pay go towards transport. Johnson rejected the idea that motorists were uncaring about the environment. RAC surveys showed that 80 per cent of members, while making it clear that they did not want to give up the freedom of the car, wanted

policies that minimise environmental impact.

Sue Tait, from the New Forest branch of Friends of the Earth, called Britain a nation of car junkies. She argued that the Government should pass a Road Traffic Reduction Bill, committing itself to reducing car use by 10 per cent of the 1990 level by 2010.

Mike Rutherford, transport journalist, lauded the car for the freedom it gave to individuals and said the problem was that not enough was spent on roads. The M3 link around Winchester, a source of tremendous local opposition when it was built a few years ago, "should have been put in a tunnel under Twyford Down" rather than carved through it, he said.

Some of the audience gave substance to Porritt's sur-

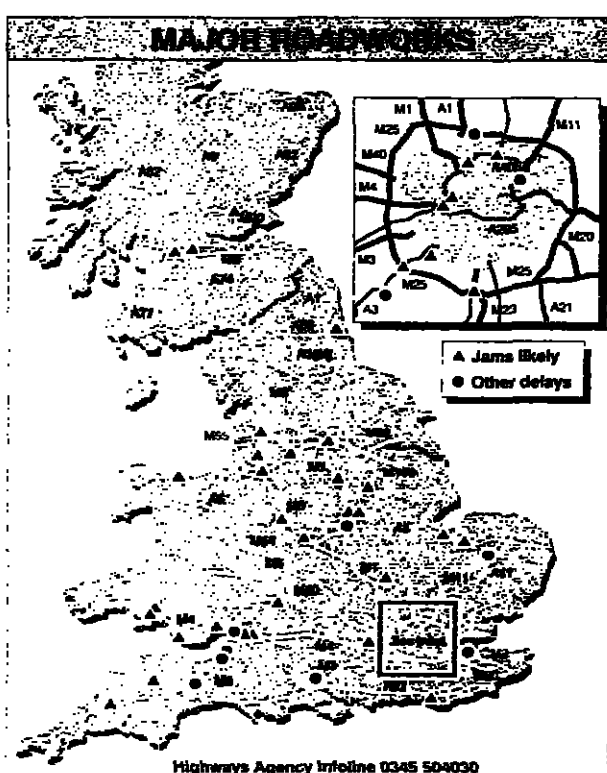


Porritt: "Pedestrians and cyclists are human beings"

realist view of the transport world in rather unlikely ways. An owner of a gym said she could not extend her facilities to help people get fit because she could not provide extra car parking spaces. Stuart Reynolds, Chief Transport Planner for Hampshire County Council, admitted afterwards that he started his career planning the M3 link around Winchester — but seeing the road carved through Twyford Down "now makes me wonder".

Reynolds admitted feeling frustrated in trying to introduce alternative schemes because the same public consultation procedure applied to them as it did to building new roads. A vociferous minority could scupper plans.

Porritt's motion was carried by a large majority. Lord Montagu, who had boldly agreed to host the event in his shrine to the car, voted against.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Speed Viper

A MODIFIED Dodge Viper with a potential top speed of more than 250mph and anticipated acceleration of 0-60mph in under 3.5 seconds is among the attractions at the International Performance Motor Show at Olympia this weekend. Autotronics of Salisbury have fitted the car with twin turbos to its 8-litre V10 engine, which are designed to produce 800bhp, almost twice the power of the standard car. Show information: 01689 890022.

Single attractions

ONE OF last year's Tyrrell Formula One cars is to join the Donington Park Grand Prix Collection beside the Derbyshire race circuit on Monday. The five halls contain more than 130 cars, some dating from the 1930s and including those raced by Moss, Senna, Fangio, Nuvolari and Prost, in the world's largest collection of single-seaters. Information: 01332 810048.

Toyota special

TOYOTA IS celebrating the 10th anniversary of its mid-engined MR2 sports car by producing a special edition of just 250 in a choice of Caribbean Blue or Lucerne Silver called the MR2 GTT-Bar. With leather trim and interior, the car is equipped with a CD player to supplement the usual eight-speaker sound system. More than 27,279 of the popular pop-up headlamp car have been sold in Britain. The special edition costs £23,149.

Sales moving up

NEW CAR sales in western Europe are expected to gain momentum in the last few months of this year and total about 12.3 million, 2.6 per cent more than last year, according to the latest Motor Business report by the Economist Intelligence Unit. It forecasts that sales in Britain will show moderate growth to just short of the two million mark.

AUTOFAX by David Long and Les Evans

FOLLOWING AN ACCIDENT IN 1968, RALPH STREET WAS RESCUED BY SEA. His boat was on the beach when the tide came in. He was rescued by a lifeguard.

AT 15-44, THE ORIGINAL LANCHESTER WAS BUILT BY FIVE TIMES FASTER THAN THE NATIONAL SPEED LIMIT THEN IN FORCE. A BOMBER WHICH 100 YEARS LATER EVEN THE £799,000 McLaren F1 LM CANNOT MATCH.

A SPY PHOTOGRAPHER WHO SPOTTED JAMES SECRET XCJS PROTOTYPE DONT BUTTER SWAPPING IT BECAUSE HE DONT BELIEVE THAT PUT A "BOMB" INTO THE PRODUCTION.

AFTER HER 35th BIRTHDAY, GREEN STRAUCHER ASKED A GERMAN JUDGE FOR A REDUCTION IN TAX. SHE WAS FINED FOR A FURTHER 10,000,000 DOLLARS IN ADVANCE.



Thomas Skold from Sweden speeds his Jaguar E-Type through the Alps. Blizzards, black ice, freezing fog and giant icicles were among the hazards faced by 161 drivers and for many the penalty points collected en route ran into thousands

If you thought our winter was bad . . .

Philip Young reports on the winners and gallant losers who endured the demanding Monte Carlo Challenge

Blizzards and driving snow, black ice, freezing fog, hail and skin-numbing rain . . . all of them hit competitors who set out for the sunshine of Monaco in the 7th Monte Carlo Challenge. Icicles by the metre hung off rock faces as drivers of classic and vintage cars snaked their way through Alpine passes.

And the weather took its toll. A total of 161 drivers set out with high hopes on the 1,500-mile journey from five venues — Bristol, Noordwijk in Holland, Stockholm, Oslo and St Moritz — but more than 50 arrived out of time. At the start in the warmth of Bristol's Swallow Royal Hotel, a simple average of 32mph seemed straightforward. But no driver managed to reach the most famous finishing ramp in rally history with a "clean sheet", and for some penalty points ran into thousands.

"It's been highly authentic and the best Monte so far," said Colin Francis, veteran navigator and top British finisher who guided Spanish driver Ignacio Sunsumedgi to

second spot overall in a "fin tail" Mercedes 220. "But it has been mighty tough."

Some crews had no heaters, some in the pre-Second World War category were wrapped in flying jackets and scarves, with no roofs, no windcreens, and a few even had braking on the rear wheels only. "Downhill descents are more exciting than skiing," said David Brock-Jest in the polished aluminium AC tourer of 1922, before engine problems forced him to a halt. The category was won by a well-driven Delahaye from Austria.

Another casualty was Sir David Steel, the former Liberal leader, whose Riley 1.5 suffered a broken differential just outside Monte Carlo. He and co-driver Andre Tammes made it to the finish line on the back of a truck, but that meant they did not qualify among the official finishers.

There were 19 nationalities in what has now become the biggest historic rally in Europe, with five countries in the top three cars. All the top three were German this year, with another Mercedes 220 —

driven by Norway's Monty Karian — winning outright, a reminder of the snowy Monte Carlo of 1960 when Mercedes romped home with a 1-2-3 clean sweep. In third spot was the former United States champion John Buffum, with ex-RAC Rally winner Neil Wilson on the maps in a little Porsche 356.

In winning the Ladies' Award, Alexandra Holt from Weymouth, Dorset, driving an MGA, maintained a unique record with her seventh straight Monte Carlo Challenge success; overall, she finished in 14th place.

But if old hands got their hands on the "biggest cups", several novices also did well in the event. Nigel Cope in a Ford Anglia won the Novice Trophy, finishing 25th overall, just ahead of Chris Chalkley in a Riley 1.5.

"I was just a face in the crowd last year cheering them off, and I thought I could do this," he recalled. "So I found an old car, spent a day at the Rally School put on by the Classic Rally Association to bone up on the map work, and



With a little help from their friends Sir David Steel and Andre Tammes needed a lift to the finishing line

here we are in Monte Carlo, only a dent in the front wing as a reminder of early mistakes," said Nigel.

Another novice entry, the 1962 MGA MkII driven by David Townsend and Dick Owens, who had spent 1,000 hours preparing it for its rally debut, finished 79th, a very creditable position for a car which had 100,000 miles on the clock. It was a suitable reward for the two men, who had spent more than 1,000 hours rebuilding it from the chassis up, running up a total bill of £6,500-plus in the process.

Hard Luck Trophy went to Ralph Struss in a big green Blower Bentley. Pre-war cars are meant to drive an easier route, with fewer mountains and more relaxed timing. Paperwork was his downfall. "I think I must be dyslexic," he explained to officials on the finish ramp, having driven the full route, heedless of the fact that, due to blizzards, many of the higher cols had been cut out at the last minute with changes of route just to help drivers like him.

His tale of woe — and the fact that he had driven the full week with no windscreen — meant that he was the runaway winner of the Peeping-

into-the Wind Trophy when it came to thawing out in the riotous party at the Hotel de Paris.

Epitomising the amateur status of classic rallying, Stephen Wild and James Cook, two mechanical engineers from Wiltshire, came last, driving the smallest car in the event, an Austin A30. They had bought it for £100, totally rebuilt it themselves and completed the whole route loaded with spares, luggage on the roof rack and at a top speed of 55mph.

Forced to stop almost every hour to pack snow around the radiator to prevent the car from boiling over, their efforts were rewarded with a standing ovation at the prizegiving, when they received the Spirit of the Rally Award.

One of the Concours Award winners for best prepared and most authentic cars was Andrew Actman from Penge, south London in a Sebring Sprite. He was following in the footsteps of his father, Sam, who drove Sprites in the Monte Carlo Rally of the 1960s.

The Monte Carlo Challenge is the closest anyone gets these days to recapturing the magic

of the 1950s and 1960s when it was regarded as one of the supreme tests of car and driver. Peter Miller, one competitor from those days recalls that in the 1965 event competitors who started from Minsk were expected to face the same rigorous timetable as others, although the border guards on their route across Eastern Europe had clearly been given no instructions to co-operate.

Even getting to the start proved a trial, with a three-hour delay on entry to East Germany, no road markings on the eastern autobahn and poor signposting which resulted in a wrong turning. Miller and his co-driver were promptly arrested on suspicion of spying by a police patrol and were only allowed on their way after paying a bribe of 200 Western cigarettes.

On that occasion, in some of the most severe weather encountered in the event's history, just 35 cars from 252 starters throughout Europe made the finish.

The rally, sponsored by Heritage Insurance, is organised by the Classic Rally Association, also organisers of the Peking-Paris Motor Challenge. Tel: 01235 851291.

Someone, somewhere is checking the database . . . it's time they bought a new car. Sue Baker explores the world of direct selling

Remember, they know where you live

Two features distinguished the unexpected doorstep caller. One was a broad, toothy smile, the other a discreet clipboard. Could I spare a few moments to be involved in some market research? "We're talking to car owners who drive recent registration models . . ."

She glanced meaningfully over her shoulder at the N-registration Ford in my driveway. It was a road-test car awaiting collection, but Ms Toothy Smile could not know that. Neither could she be blamed for this being the third interruption. Within a fortnight (the other two by phone) from market researchers eager to quiz me about my motoring habits and future car-buying intentions.

Finding out precisely what we drive, why, and when we will next want to upgrade to a newer model has become a sharp spearhead of carmakers' marketing activity. Doorstep and telephone callers seeking this information on their behalf are becoming a familiar phenomenon.

Every day, in newspapers and magazines, tempting competitions woo car owners to reveal the model they currently possess and to volunteer not just the year but even the month when they anticipate changing it. Every time you buy a new household appliance, the guarantee questionnaire quizzes you to extract the same details.

An increasingly ferocious car marketing war is being waged to capture our attention, and hopefully our custom, next time around. Manufacturers, partly spurred by the erosion of private buyers in a largely stagnant new car market, are placing a growing reliance on direct marketing activity to stimulate sales.



Fiat's Internet commercial for the Bravo/Brava and the Trafficmaster page from Vauxhall's Internet site — anyone responding becomes another target for direct marketing

tors on direct mail, and we have been at it for several years ourselves."

Over the past three to four years, Ford's direct marketing has been growing by 10 to 15 per cent a year, Pallister reveals. He takes pride in Ford having one of the most extensive databases in the industry. "It probably runs to one-and-a-half million people, and we make good use of it. But we do not cold mail. It is all very carefully targeted, and we are continuously researching to keep it that way."

"We try to bespoke communicate to the individual and address his or her lifestyle directly. We have gone out in the past on a scattergun approach and it is a waste of money."

Names on the database include existing owners, those who have

asked for information about the cars, and lists bought in from firms that specialise in collating them. A recent example of the increasing sophistication with which carmakers now target potential customers was the research Ford carried out for the launch of the Galaxy. It surveyed 49,000 new car buyers to build up a detailed profile of who might buy the new model, so it would know who to approach.

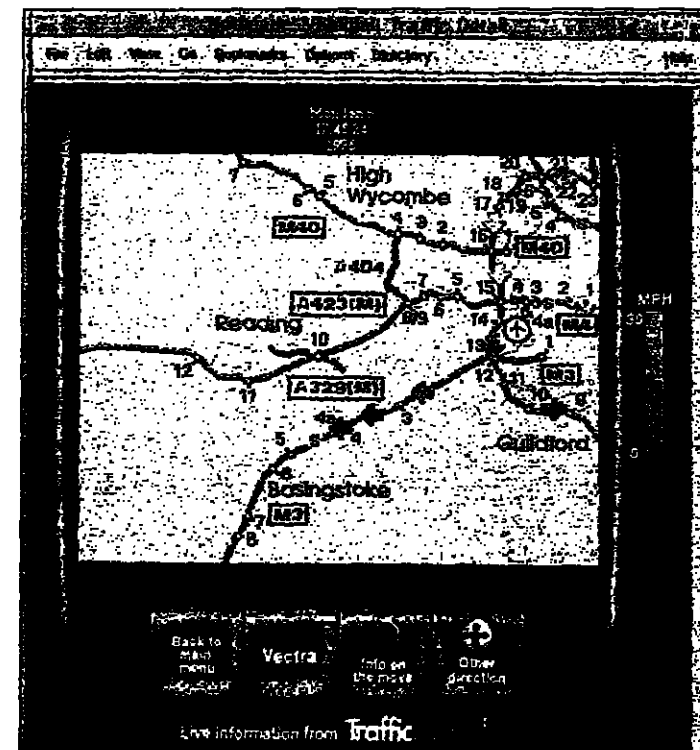
Vauxhall also acknowledges the trend towards a much more direct approach to find more customers. Direct marketing manager, Paul Harrison, says his company's use of this type of activity has grown by 40 per cent over the past five years.

"The most important thing is to give people the appropriate message at the correct time," he adds. "We try to identify when people are

coming up to the replacement cycle, and contact them at the right point. Direct marketing pays off because it gets results."

Vauxhall has eagerly embraced new technologies to add muscle to its direct approach. When launching the Vectra, it sent out information to target customers on CD-Rom. It was the first car manufacturer in the UK to exploit the Internet; as well as setting up its own pages featuring the Vectra and Frontera, it has used sponsorship of the Trafficmaster page to target business drivers, who are then wooed across to browse the product pages. Anyone responding to the Internet pages becomes another target for direct marketing.

Any new model launch now



inevitably brings with it a fresh surge of direct marketing activity. When Citroën launches its new Saxo, small hatchback in May, owners of similar models can expect their phones to start ringing.

Marc Raven, Citroën's public affairs director, says that as part of the launch campaign, "we will telemarket, that is phone people we have reason to believe might be interested in it, and offer them information and a test drive. It's a very cost-effective way of reaching people, and it's growing."

At Rover, product communications director Denis Chick says his company's use of direct approaches to potential customers has changed rather than grown. "We are not actually doing it more than we have in the past, but we are now doing it a lot better."

"Like the rest of the industry, we used to shoot out a huge volume of junk mail. But there is no point in something which goes straight through the letterbox and into the dustbin. Over the past 18 months we have done a lot of work on targeting what we send to make it much more directly relevant to the person receiving it."

So that unexpected voice at the end of the line may be trying to sell you a Rover. Do people really welcome such calls, or do others, like me, find them an irritating intrusion in a working day?

"We tend to do most of our calls in the evening, when people are more likely to be at home and not working," says Chick. "And we find we do get very positive responses. It wouldn't be worth doing unless it worked — and it does."

AD AWARDS

Renault wins with Papa and Nicole

LOVE THEM or hate them, Nicole and her Papa make a bigger impact on the motoring public than any other characters in car advertising, writes Alan Capps. The stars of that little soap opera which sells the Renault Clio helped the company to a second successive win in the "best advertising" category of awards made by *Complete Car* this week.

According to a poll of the magazine's readers nearly 40 per cent of women mentioned the television commercial favourably. But that verdict came hard on the heels of another survey that concluded that women detested almost all car ads because they were patronising. The respondents in that survey, carried out by Condé Nastie, publishers of *Vogue* and *Tatler*, singled out the "insulting" Renault ad for criticism.

The *Complete Car* awards are voted by 470,000 readers of 12 sister titles throughout Europe. Renault was voted best advertiser in five countries. In Britain, VW was second followed by BMW, Ford, Volvo and Rover.

Daewoo, the Korean company which introduced its revolutionary direct-selling methods here only last year, was seventh. It was also voted the best value-for-money.

In Britain votes for the best car in nine categories were: ● Compact, VW Polo ● Small family, Peugeot 306 ● Medium family, Audi A4 ● Large family, BMW 5-Series ● Luxury, Jaguar XJ6/12 ● Sports, Aston Martin DB7 ● Convertible, Rover MGF ● Off-road, Range Rover ● MPV, Ford Galaxy.

Peter Barnard: p2

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Mr C.D. aged 37, Humberstone, H. reg. BMW 1816.
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CAR AUCTIONS

H&H CLASSIC AUCTIONS

Wednesday 21st February 1996 @ 1.00pm

Perfection Gardens Burton

1933 Land Rover 3 litre motor.
1933 Rover 2000 open motor.
1933 Singer Leaning 4 seat.
1933 Vauxhall 2000 limo.
1933 Austin 400 Sports DHC.
1933 Austin 400 Sports DHC.
1933 Austin 400 Sports DHC.
1933 Austin 400 Sports DHC.
1933 Austin 400 Sports DHC.

Lockyear Audi

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Audi at Dovercourt

01225 428000

Dane Audi

01224 390033

Northfield Audi

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Motor Services Bath

01225 428000

Dovercourt Audi

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THE NATURAL CHOICE FOR BMW

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Every month, ten prize draw winners will enjoy an afternoon's performance driving courtesy of the Nigel Mansell Racing School at Brands Hatch, Oulton Park or Snetterton.

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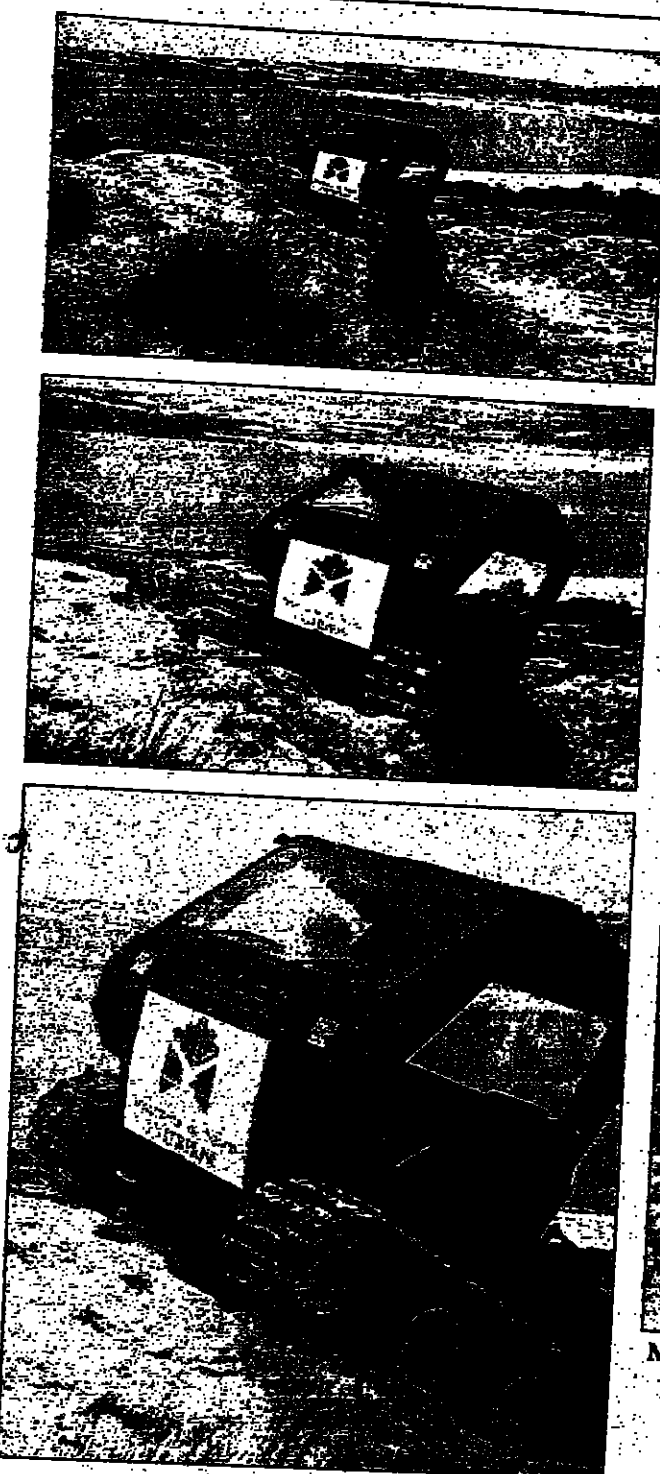
Call now for further information and your chance to win an afternoon at the Nigel Mansell Racing School.

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Approved Used Cars

ALL PERSONS PROVIDING THEIR NAME AND ADDRESS BY CALLING 0800 777 137 WILL BE ENTERED INTO A MONTHLY DRAW OFFER ENDS 31.03.96. TEN PRIZES WILL BE OFFERED EACH MONTH. PARTICIPANTS MUST BE OVER 18 AND HOLD A FULL CURRENT DRIVING LICENCE. ONLY 1 ENTRY PER PERSON. WINNERS WILL BE NOTIFIED BY POST 3 WEEKS AFTER EACH MONTHLY DRAW WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE ON THE 15TH OF EACH MONTH. NO CASH ALTERNATIVE. NO EMPLOYEES OF BMW, OR ANY OF ITS DEALERS, AGENTS OR THEIR FAMILIES MAY ENTER. A LIST OF WINNERS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON WRITTEN REQUEST TO: BMW INFORMATION SERVICE, PO BOX 161, CROYDON CR9 1QB.

Born in Scotland, the Glencoe and Glenalmond all-terrain vehicles travel very well. Alan Jabez reports



Making progress: Scot-Track's Marketing Manager, Michael Cullen, checks the Glencoe's grip on the Cairngorms, among the most inhospitable mountain terrain in Britain

Tracking the world market

Hands up those who can name a British vehicle manufacturer which only sold its first model in the late 1980s, but has subsequently won orders from around the globe. Customers have ranged from the emergency services in Britain, to a Texan-based oil company, Middle Eastern armed forces, an Indian theme park and relief workers operating in the mountains of Afghanistan.

This manufacturer is not based in the motor heartland of the English Midlands or the south of Essex, but close to lochs and rolling green hills in the far north of Scotland.

However, this may be the company's ideal location, as Scot-Track manufactures a range of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) which go much further than any standard four-wheel drive.

I was invited to take the company's top-of-the-range model — the nine-seater (three in the cab and six in the back), eight-wheeled Glencoe — for a punishing ride close to the Cairngorms — among the most inhospitable mountain terrain in Britain. After loading the vehicle on to the back of a lorry, we drove to a huge, private estate where the land was so rough there was only a

narrow lane to get there and not a house or cottage in sight. To add a sense of drama, there was a biting wind in the air and freezing snow on the ground. But the Glencoe scampered up the rock-strewn hillside like a puppy playing in a garden.

Admittedly, we were only travelling a few miles an hour, but when you are ascending a hill so steep that many walkers would struggle to get up it, what matters is reaching the top, not the time it takes to get there. With its wide tracks, the Glencoe could climb a slope of 1:1, I was told — although that was not something I was willing to try.

Nonetheless, I doubt there is any terrain the aptly-named Glencoe will not traverse, including quicksand, peat bogs and deep ditches. It even has floats, so the vehicle can go straight into the water.

With hydraulic transmission and a hydrostatic steering system, the controls couldn't be easier. I had two levers between my knees which I pushed forward to go forward, and pulled back to reverse. To turn round, I simply held one lever steady, while pushing the other. Braking was nothing more complicated than keeping the levers together in neutral.

There was excellent visibility through the Perspex window ahead, although with only a canvas canopy, there was not much protection from the cold wind at the side.

There was not much protection either from the bumps and bruises. As there is no suspension to speak of, I learnt to keep a firm grip on the steel safety frame every time we tackled any serious sized objects. The frame also offers protection in the unlikely event of the vehicle rolling over.

Priced at £24,000, the turbo-charged Glencoe is the company's most expensive model. A cheaper ATV is the Glenalmond, costing only £16,000 and boasting a maximum speed of 20mph (on the flat). The primary difference is that the Glencoe's extra power means it can perform many more industrial tasks. The range of uses for both vehicles, as well as their durability, is the prime reason they are becoming so popular.

The Army has recently confirmed its first order for these vehicles, joining other high-

profile customers such as several fire brigades, the Northern Constabulary, which patrols the Highlands and Islands, the National Trust, Forestry Commission, British Telecom, electricity boards and the National Rivers Authority, as well as a number of estate managers.

Many customers request special modifications before delivery so that the vehicles can undertake very specific tasks. So far, these have included accessories to enable them to sweep for mines in war zones of the Middle East, clear snow from roads in the North of Scotland and lift and carry heavy logs in several remote forests.

Farmers are also becoming interested. They are especially attracted by the option of the extra-soft "marshmallow" tyres (instead of tracks) which cause virtually negligible damage to the land.

The company's other models include a range of high-speed all-terrain go-karts and what is believed to be the world's only multi-purpose, off-road wheelchair. Now fol-

lowing the success of the Glencoe and the Glenalmond, Scot-Track is about to launch its latest model, the Hillcat. Priced at less than £10,000, this is primarily aimed at land owners with lesser needs and smaller resources. It does have a few new, novel features though, such as a removable rear door which makes it much easier to load large animals or other heavy objects on to the back seats. However, like the Glencoe and Glenalmond, it also has easy to remove tracks to increase its capabilities.

Scot-Track was founded in 1987 by Sandy Reid, who had been working as the distributor of a French ATV. But he felt that it had a number of design faults and approached the makers asking if he could make certain changes. They refused, so he set about designing his own vehicle. He found support from a British-educated Iranian engineer, Manochehr Salek, who was willing to move to the Moray Firth and equally keen to turn the Scottish vehicle concept into reality.

Although there was no recognised workforce with motor vehicle experience in the area, there was a large pool of

skilled labour from the nearby oil industry who were willing to retrain. The result is that more than 300 vehicles have so far been built and the company is now practically bursting out of its small premises in the corner of an industrial estate on the outskirts of Nairn between Inverness and Aberdeen.

Given the company's remote location, its success is perhaps all the more remarkable. Marketing manager Michael Cullen says that in their first few years it was easier to attract overseas buyers as they would simply land at Heathrow and catch the next connecting flight to Inverness. By contrast, he believes many potential British customers were put off by the thought of having to make the long journey across Britain to visit a company few people had heard of. But once Scot-Track made the decision to attend more "outdoor" shows and news of the vehicles' capabilities got around, inquiries have barely stopped.

Demand is now so great that the company is already in discussion with an entrepreneur in Ecuador about an assembly arrangement which would give it a low-cost entry into the potentially huge South American market.

Completely cleared of all charges after a six-month sentence

The reality of it dawned gradually: six months driving a diesel-engined car. Would I get time off for good behaviour? Would there be parole so I could drive a petrol car sometimes? And there was the prospect of all those jokes: "I didn't order a taxi", or "I could have sworn I heard a truck..."

With all this in mind, it was with mixed feelings that I took delivery of a 1.9-litre Volkswagen Golf GL TDI (turbo-charged Direct Injection) for a six-month relationship. But it looked good in red with colour-coded bumpers, and the posh GL trim level included powered windows, mirrors and sunroof. There was a Sony radio/cassette.

The words bright, fashionable and elegant, did not come immediately to mind to describe the interior. However, the driving seat and steering column had height adjustment, so I could sit in the semi-reclining position I prefer. The instruments were superbly clear and all the stalks and buttons seemed to be in the right places.

So I set it to work; the 90bhp

Stuart Birch is converted to the attractions of diesel by Volkswagen's Golf GL TDI

engine injecting directly without a moment's pause, for this diesel leaves no time to do *The Times* crossword while waiting for glowplugs to heat. Now, after 6,000 miles of reliable Goldfishing, I have to confess to at least a partial change of automotive religion: I am now a diesel believer.

The main reasons are threefold. First, the fuel gauge needle's grudging downward movement; consumption has not averaged less than 50mpg and once reached 60mpg, second, performance: it will move from 0-60mph in 11.5 seconds and has a top speed of 110mph. And third, there is lots of engine torque, which means it pulls with vigour

from not much more than a tickover.

The 60mpg was down to my wife's lightness of touch on the accelerator pedal commuting to work from our rural home into the London suburbs. The worst figure so far has been a little under 53mpg, when the Golf was used almost exclusively on motorways.

Refuelling a diesel car used to mean arrival at the office or some social event smelling like a refinery, because diesel pumps get sticky and pongy. Now most garages provide disposable gloves.

The Golf's ride is generally good, but handling could be better. The TDI is far from TDous to drive and sometimes has an identity crisis, now knowing whether it is a GTI or a stolid diesel. In fact, it is a bit of a *schneidwagen* and deserves rauter suspension and sharper responses. It is expected to get both soon, along with the option of the 110bhp engine of the Audi A4.

General drivability is excellent, with muscular acceleration, even from very low engine speeds. This minimises gearchanges and is a big plus

in city traffic, where instant response is often needed.

At anything more than low speed, when engine rattle is noticed (it has also suffered a different sort of rattle — from the fascia), the Golf's engine is quiet and very smooth; it is road and aerodynamic noise that let it down a little on the motorway. Its good manners in town are complemented by that fine, height-adjustable driving position.

The rear wash/wipe system's operation causes frustration: get it right and you may qualify for Mensa. The radio controls are insufferably small and the heater is rather slow to get really hot on very cold mornings. Interior and luggage space is reasonable and the rear seats are divided and folding.

Price is arguably a bit steep at £14,060 — but overall this diesel is a rattling good car.

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF GL TDI
Engine: Four-cylinder direct injection turbo-charged diesel, 90bhp, driving front wheels. Five-speed manual transmission.
Performance: 0-60mph in 11.5 seconds, average 58mpg.
Equipment: Driver's airbag and seat adjustment; central locking with security protection; powered sunroof, windows and door mirrors; rear head restraints.
Price: £14,060.



The Golf GL TDI: after 6,000 miles, I have to confess to at least a partial change of religion: I am now a diesel believer

NEWS IN BRIEF

A racing start for new McLaren

McLAREN has sold all eight 1996 racing versions of its F1 Grand Tourer. The 1996 GTRs are updated versions of the car that won both the Le Mans 24-hour race and the Global GT Endurance championship in its debut season last year. Although new regulations restrict the 6-litre V12 BMW engine to 600bhp rather than 640bhp, other improvements make up for the power loss.

Korea opening

DAEWOO is to open its first showroom in Ulster in April, the Korean firm announced at the Ulster Motor Show which continues over this weekend. The one-acre site in Boucher Road, Belfast, will have touch-screen displays enabling customers to find out about its nine-car range.

Higher gear

THE RACY car magazine *Max Power* has overtaken the BBC's *Top Gear* as Britain's biggest-selling motoring monthly with a July-December circulation of 160,461.

Vaughan Freeman explains why second-hand cars will become increasingly popular

Sale goes on in the bargain basement

Used car buyers will enjoy five years of cheap deals with second-hand prices set to tumble this year, and prices overall falling only fractionally above today's bargain basement levels.

The forecast comes in a new report claiming that most motorists buy used not just to save money, but because cars less than a year or two old are seen as more reliable than a brand new vehicle that could have teething problems.

Low prices will benefit most British drivers. Industry analysts Market Facts and Business Information (MFI) report that 80 per cent of all used car sales are of vehicles priced below £5,000, while the average stands at around £3,000. Used car sales outnumber new sales by more than three to one.

The cost of the average used car, says MFI, which last year stood at £3,055, will fall 3 per cent this year to £2,965, and by 2000 will have crept back up only slightly to £3,135, a rise of less than 3 per cent, far below the projected rate of inflation.

Driven by market forces, the clamp on prices will go hand in hand with a huge increase in used car sales as the number of adult drivers rises and manufacturers move to cash in on the highly profitable second-hand car industry. MFI forecasts that used car sales will rise 16 per cent over the next five years, from a 1995 total of 5.6 million to a total value of £16.9bn, to £20.2bn by 2000.

The quality of used cars will improve as manufacturers, who in recent years switched their focus from new car sales to "nearby-new" ones (vehicles that have spent three or four months on a daily rental or hire firm fleet) switch again to target their efforts on the second-hand market.

MFI report author Robert Macnab says: "Manufacturers and franchised dealers are attempting to increase their penetration of the used car

market, and to achieve this dealers need to sell a higher proportion of older and higher mileage used cars in the sub-£5,000 sector."

Why buy used rather than new? Macnab says: "Used car buyers are aware of the improvements manufacturers have made in the reliability and durability of cars produced in recent years, and are happy to accept higher mileage if they are confident that a car has been well maintained from new."

Despite more people buying used, prices will stay where they are now as manufacturers seek ways of coping with their huge over-capacity.

Across Europe, new car sales total around 13 million annually, but production capacity is an estimated two million above that. Once cars have gone from manufacturers via rental fleets to retail customers as "nearby new" with fewer than 10,000 miles on the clock, they pass to the second-hand market a year or two later.

"There will be an increase in the supply of used cars due to an increase in new car registrations, and there will be a corresponding growth in volume demand," says Macnab. "This will be due to an increase in the size of the adult population, an increase in the number of households, and a

continued growth in car ownership, particularly among women."

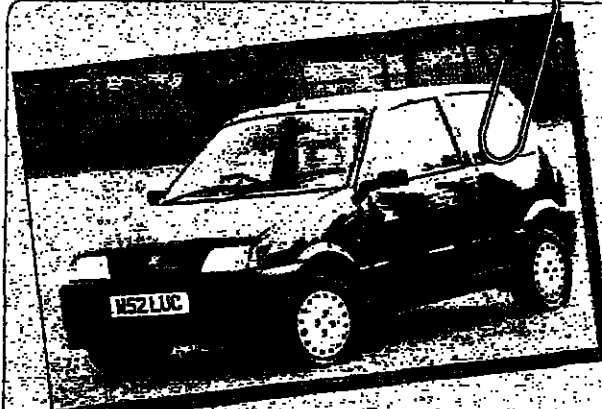
"This will be supported by an upturn in consumer spending from maturing Tessa accounts and building society mergers, and by shorter retention periods as vehicle usage and average annual mileage increases."

At the same time, knowledgeable buyers will put more pressure on franchised dealers to back their second-hand vehicles with watertight assurances. Macnab says: "The main concerns of used car buyers are

quality and the protection provided by warranties. They want a guarantee or an assurance that a used car will not require major maintenance work shortly after they have purchased it."

"Used car warranties are perceived as not providing that assurance. Buyers want an unconditional guarantee that a used car will remain reliable, or defect-free, for a minimum period after purchase. Such an assurance would reduce the risk from buying a used car and add significant value to dealer used car sales."

USED CAR BRIEF



FIAT CINQUECENTO
Like Rover with the Mini, Fiat has a big history building small cars. From the "mighty mouse" Topolino to the rear-engine 126, small cars with Italian styling have been Fiat's forte, and the latest mini-incarnation is no exception. Cinquecento 900S and 900SX were launched in 1993, both powered by the same four-cylinder, 40bhp, 899cc pushrod engine derived from the Fiat 127. The 1.1 litre, 54bhp Sporting model with body-coded bumpers, and sports wheels was launched a year ago.



GOOD NEWS: Fiat's new 900SX is a good-looking car, with a sleek, aerodynamic profile. It's also a good car to drive, with a responsive engine and a comfortable ride. The 900SX is a good choice for anyone looking for a small, economical car.

REPLACEMENT PARTS: Fiat's reputation for reliability is well-deserved. Replacement parts are readily available and of good quality. The 900SX is a good choice for anyone looking for a small, economical car.

LOOK FOR: A car that is reliable, economical, and easy to drive. The 900SX is a good choice for anyone looking for a small, economical car.

OVERALL: The 900SX is a good choice for anyone looking for a small, economical car. It's reliable, economical, and easy to drive.

50 POPULAR SELLERS

MODEL	Jan-96	Feb-96	Chge
Audi 80 2.0E 4dr	12950	12995	0.34
BMW 316i 4dr Auto	14395	14250	-1.00
BMW 318i Coupe	17095	16850	-1.43
Citroen Xantia 2.0i LX 5dr	9225	9695	5.09
Citroen XM 2.0i V6X Turbo 5dr	13095	13065	0.00
Daihatsu Sportrack ELX 3dr	11150	11150	0.00
Fiat Cinquecento SX 3dr	4250	4225	-0.58
Ford Fiesta 1.1i LX 3dr	5995	5850	-2.41
Ford Escort 1.6i LX 5dr	8095	8195	1.23
Ford Mondeo 1.8i LX 4dr	8175	8250	0.91
Ford Granada 2.0i Ghia Cab 4dr	11850	11895	0.37
Honda Civic LSi 3dr	9550	9250	-3.14
Honda Accord 2.0i ES 4dr	14650	14450	-1.36
Isuzu Trooper 3.1 Turbo Citation 5dr	19550	19550	0.00
Jaguar XJ6 3.2 Auto	19550	20000	0.25
Kia Pride 1.3 LX 5dr	4850	4850	0.00
Land Rover Discovery 3.9 V8i 3dr	15595	15550	-0.28
Land Rover Discovery 300 TDI 5dr	17450	17450	0.00
Range Rover Vogue SE 4dr Auto	27500	27250	-0.90
Lexus LS400 4dr Auto	34550	34250	-0.72
Mazda 323 1.8i GLX Fastback 5dr	8995	7995	-8.06
Mazda MX-6 1.8i 2dr	13095	13250	1.18
Mercedes-Benz C180 Elegance 4dr Autol	18795	19795	0.00
Mitsubishi New Shogun Diesel 5dr	21000	21000	0.00
Nissan 1.0LX 3dr	6195	5795	-3.55
Nissan Primera 1.6i SLX 5dr	9095	9175	0.87
Peugeot 106 1.10X 3dr	6175	5095	-1.29
Peugeot 306 1.4X 3dr	8850	8875	0.28
Proton Persona 1.6GL 5dr	7425	7450	0.33
Renault Clio RL 1.2 Prima 3dr	5795	5795	0.00
Renault Laguna 2.0 RT 5dr	10650	11095	4.17
Rover Metro 1.1i Quest 3dr	4450	4525	1.68
Rover 216i Cat 5dr	7750	7750	0.00
Rover 350i 4dr	11795	11795	0.00
Saab 9000cal 2.0 5dr	16295	16195	-0.61
Seat Ibiza 1.4i CLX 5dr	7095	6895	-5.63
Toyota Corolla 1.3i GL 3dr	8325	8995	0.84
Toyota Carina E 1.6i LX 5dr	8950	8975	0.27
Toyota MR2 GT 2dr	17195	17350	0.90
Vauxhall Corsa 1.2 LS 3dr	6350	6350	0.00
Vauxhall Astra 1.4i LS (8000) 5dr	7595	7595	0.00
Vauxhall Cavalier 1.8i LS 5dr	8495	8495	0.00
Vauxhall Omega 2.0i 16V GLS 4dr	13295	13350	0.41
Volkswagen Golf 1.6i CL 5dr	8925	9175	2.80
Volkswagen Passat 1.8i CL 4dr	9695	10095	4.12
Volvo 440 1.8i 5dr	7975	8095	1.50
Volvo 940 2.0i 4dr	12795	13350	4.33
Mercedes-Benz S320 Auto	43750	44000	0.57
Ford Probe 2.0i 16V 3dr	12095	11995	-0.78
Subaru Impreza 2000 4dr Estate	15950	15850	-0.00

Prices rounded to simulate actual dealer discount prices. HB = hatchback, S = saloon. Price changes based on M.R.P. low mileage cars. Figures supplied by CAP Market Research.

A COMPANY car is still the most popular benefit an employee can be offered, despite recent changes that have reduced the tax advantages of having one, according to a new survey. It suggests that the freedom from worry about insurance and repairs is the deciding factor in many employees' calculations. Although nearly half of employers with company car schemes are now offering a cash alternative, only 10 per cent of employees take it up. The survey shows that 95 per cent of all employers provided company cars and of those 49 per cent offered a cash alternative, up from 28 per cent in 1993. Of those who did not offer the choice, 25 per cent said they were under pressure to do so. The average value of cash alternatives ranged from 26 per cent of list price for cars costing £40,000 to 43 per cent of list price for those costing £5,000.

The Watson Wyatt Survey of Company Cars and Flexible Benefits costs £150. Further information: 01753 341144.

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300 E auto 91 H, 458, Silver, 1995, 100,000 miles, 113,290. Tel: 01737 822240

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Mercedes-Benz

0114 2753391

0181 983 4444

01473 232322

01992 514444

01223 872672

0374 809911

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0374 809911

01223 872672

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TAYSIDE NUMBERS

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REGISTRATION NUMBERS

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Who's the...
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Who's that blonde in the past of an American invader?

He is, according to the tabloids, the most hated man on radio. It's an exaggeration, of course, but Paul Gambaccini's arrival on Radio 3 has provoked howls of outrage, even on the floor of the House of Commons.

Gambaccini, once Radio 1's youngest disc jockey, presents the much-maligned *Morning Collection* on the corporation's most reactionary channel. The Great Gambo, as he is known, co-authored the *Guinness Book of British Singles*, was accused of vandalism by Gerald Kaufman, pugnacious chairman of the Commons Heritage Select Committee.

Gambaccini, an accomplished classical pianist, has been accused of being egotistical, patronising and a latter-day Liberace. His accent has not helped. He devotes only four minutes of his show to his own voice; the other 52 are music. But it is four minutes too much for his army of detractors. Many Radio 3 aficionados hope — and pray — that the American's days are numbered, but the BBC is standing by its man. For now.

How did you first learn to drive?

I took the driver education course at Staples High School in Westport, Connecticut, in 1965. I had just turned 16. The 1966 yearbook included an advertisement for the summer school which had a posed photograph of me examining a car

I remember Suki, Paul Gambaccini tells Andrew Pierce

engine with a blonde named Suki Fontilleu. Frankly, I was more interested in examining Suki.

What was your first car?

I am prepared for a chorus of serious shouting on this one. It was a crimson Plymouth Sport Fury. My father bought it for me to drive to school, which was a mile away. Such is the American way of life.

What car do you drive now, and why?

A BMW 316i. It was chosen for me by a friend who knows eight million times more about cars than I. He knew it would be perfect for someone who wants a comfortable drive without having to worry about how the thing runs (you see, I was concentrating on Suki Fontilleu). My own contribution was to ensure that it was silver.

Do you like driving?

In London at nights and at weekends. Driving in the week is antisocial and counter-productive. My

stress level shoots up in traffic jams and I flatly refuse to drive on motorways. I lost my motorway virginity at 2.35am on my way back from a personal appearance. I was sleeping on the back seat when I was awakened by the impact on the front right corner. The object in collision then ricocheted off my back door. Our vehicle came to a halt. A lorry travelling in the opposite direction had shed a 6ft metal beam, which bounded across the central divider and headed straight towards us. It took no mathematical genius to know the combined speed of impact was in excess of 140mph. Never again.

What is your most hated car?

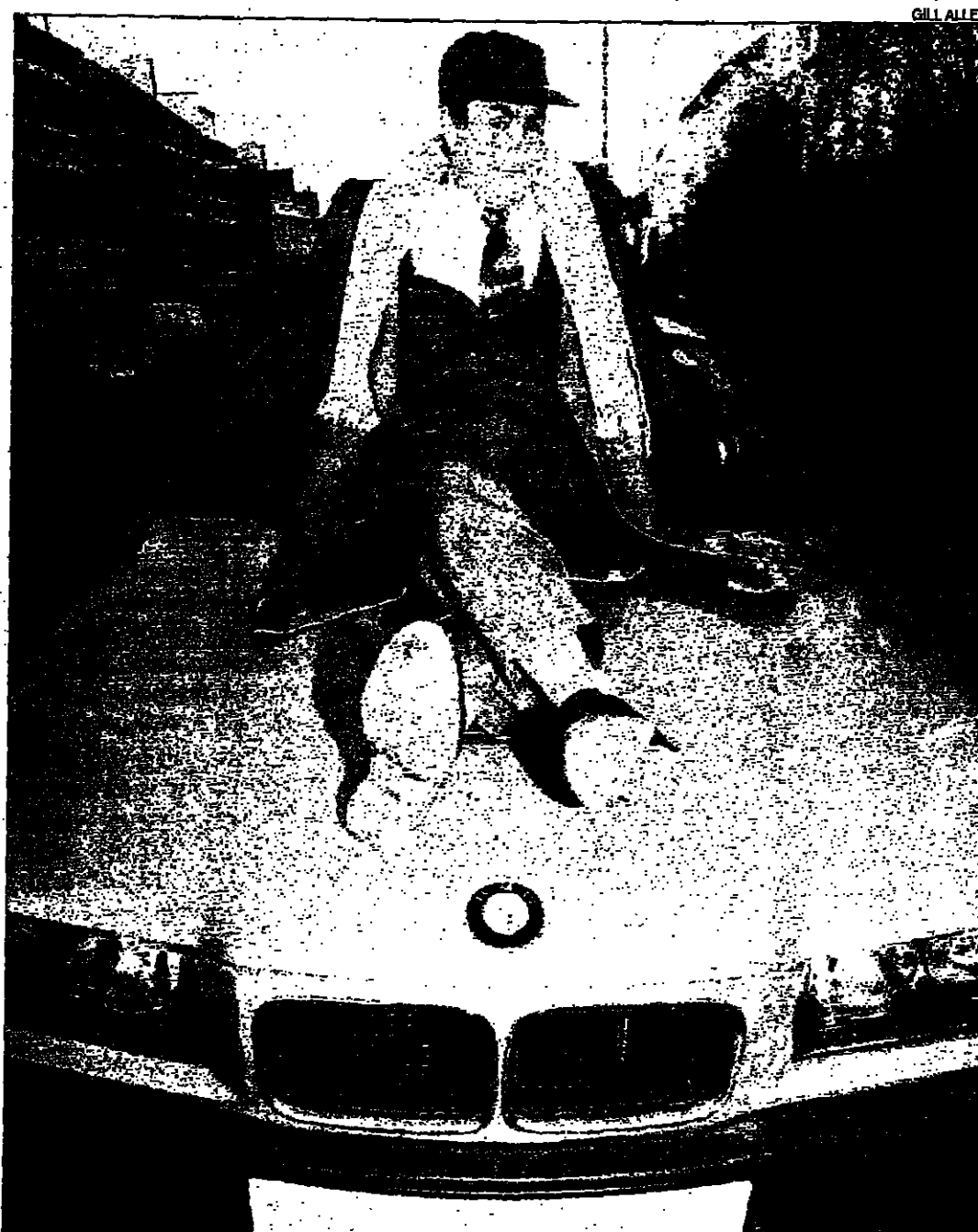
There is enough bad feeling in the world without starting to hate cars.

What is your dream car?

A Batmobile would be nice.

What is your worst habit in the car?

Causing fender benders. When second in a queue waiting to turn left in city traffic, I see the car in front starting to turn into the flow. I look right, then left, then look right again as I move forward. Wrong. Sometimes the lead car has had second thoughts and stopped in its tracks. It causes a fender bender every few years, as I have found to my cost.



Paul Gambaccini and his BMW 316i: "My contribution was to ensure that it was silver"

What infuriates you most about other drivers?

Behaving like the lead car in previous answer.

What is the most unusual thing you have done in your car?

When I was 18, I drove some friends from a college on the New Hampshire-Vermont border. We loaded up a full Plymouth Sport Fury (green this time) and drove to a girls' school, where each of the boys picked up a female companion for a trip into New York State where the drinking age was lower. Three people sat on the floor, four in the back seat, two in the front seat next to me, and two in the boot.

Have you ever had points on your licence?

I was caught speeding on my way from New Jersey to New Hampshire in the Bronx. A belligerent patrolman claimed I had been doing 60 in a 50mph limit. Maybe 57, but it was never 60. But I have always made it a policy not to argue with a man with a gun. So, after he shouted at me until he was hoarse, I pleaded guilty and paid the fine.

What do you listen to in the car?

Radio and compact discs. I have a choice of 32 radio stations in the BMW, too many even for an inveterate button pusher like me.

If you were Secretary of State for Transport, what is the first thing you would do?

Nationalise the railways and give London Transport the millions of pounds it has been starved of in the last 15 years.

What is your favourite car advertisement?

This may cause curses from my friends in advertising, but I can't remember a single car commercial that is not running.

British brainwave that could put motorists miles ahead

Backed by the legendary Cosworth name, the Merritt engine offers a double bonus, says Hugh Hunston

Conceiving, designing and building a petrol engine which is markedly more economical and cleaner than state-of-the-art diesel units could add the name Merritt to those of Otto, Diesel and Wankel in the internal combustion Hall of Fame.

In conjunction with Coventry University and Cosworth Engineering, Dan Merritt believes his invention can win the "very, very big prize" of doubling the distance covered for each gallon consumed by a conventional petrol car while creating a cleaner motoring environment.

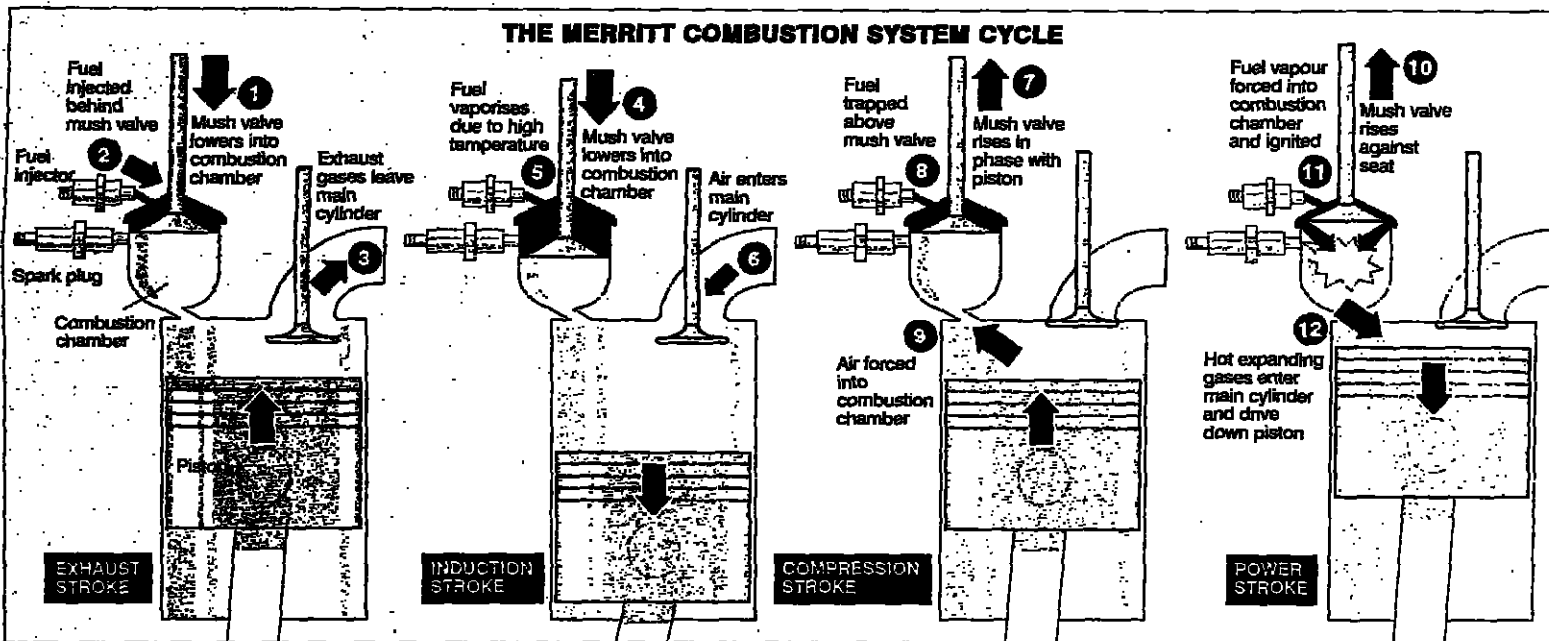
By the end of this year Cosworth, better known for high performance, high-tech motorsport engines, hopes to have the Merritt Cycle engine running a nondescript family hatchback. The fact that Cosworth's advanced research and development unit in Northampton has become involved, by buying rights to develop the power plant to a production stage, has added corporate credibility to Dr Merritt's aspirations.

The technology is housed in a one-cylinder, 440cc testbed unit with the object of refining it to the point of adding three

more cylinders to create a "real engine". While major car firms have shown interest, commercial caution dictates that they want an operational and comparable piece of hardware before sinking funds and reputations into the search for the economic and environmental advantage.

Dubbed the "Series Eight" — Dr Merritt has already taken out seven previous patents on his invention — the latest application will probably challenge non-engineers to tell the difference by peering under an engine bay.

Externally, the unit may be slightly taller than a conventional petrol engine by virtue of the radical workings within its higher cylinder head configuration. In simplistic terms, the Merritt Cycle Spark Ignition system involves a small second piston in a form of antechamber, incorporated within the cylinder head, where critical "mixing" of fuel and air is carried out before it is forced into the combustion chamber for ignition. The small piston or "mush valve" is linked by a common overhead camshaft and runs at half the speed of the conventional larger pis-



ton's parallel four (induction, compression, ignition and exhaust) strokes. It first moves down as fuel enters the mini-cylinder above.

This happens during the exhaust stroke, as the main piston rises and expels exhaust gases. As the engine draws in air during induction, the special valve continues to move down and the fuel vapourises into a very rich fuel/air mixture.

During upward compression stroke, the valve-shaped piston also moves up, and pushes the mixture into the

combustion chamber, where it is ignited by a conventional spark plug and the hot expanding gas forces down the piston on power stroke.

By separating the fuel mixture and compressed air until the last, or optimum, moment before combustion, the process makes for far more efficient burning of fuel. This results in a marked improvement in mechanical efficiency. This gives the fuel a faster burn rate, releasing energy more rapidly.

The process has allowed Cosworth to apply a 15:1 compression ratio — far higher than that of conventional petrol engines. Mike Fry, Cosworth's principle research and development engineer, also talks of air/fuel ratios of between 16:1 and the ultra-lean extreme of 75:1.

Apart from obvious economy and emission advantages over a diesel, the Merritt Cycle engine can run up to 6,000rpm, so providing superior low torque flexibility and driveability not normally associated with "oil burners".

Ironically, the PhD research project was started 12 years ago on igniting fuel with a platinum catalyst on the walls of a combustion chamber. It has resulted in a system that eliminates the need for a precious metal catalytic converter. It promises to expel virtually no particulates, which have been linked with cancer, while the amount of hydrocarbons and unburnt fuel is significantly lower than conventional petrol counterparts.

Lower fuel consumption and cleaner exhaust emissions are reason enough for corporate enthusiasm, but the fact that conventional engineering could be applied in producing the Merritt engine dispels anxiety about exotic materials and technology which requires prolonged proving routines.

Cosworth insiders, who hope to have an operational vehicle running early next year, believe Merritt-powered vehicles could be on sale between five and ten years from now. Dr Merritt puts the timescale at nearer four years, adding: "What it really

comes down to is how badly the car makers want it.

"Even if the engine was not superior on the emissions front, which it is, the potential of going twice the distance on the same fuel is a major environmental benefit."

Halving pollution — on the fuel consumed basis alone — is a prime motivator when the explosion of car ownership in emerging nations requires radical environmental solutions. An average small car, returning 30mpg over 10,000 miles a year, spews out 3.5 tons of carbon dioxide.

Dr Merritt and his Cosworth colleagues are wary about predicting the scale of projected fuel savings, with theoretical estimates varying from 30 to 60 per cent of the fuel used by current petrol cars. If it uses half the fuel, it travels double the distance. That could translate into a 70mpg average during stop-start urban use.

Delighted that a British invention is being developed by a leading British engineering firm, Dr Merritt believes the lack of a threat to vested interests surrounding conventional engine technology is an added bonus.

"I suppose if you can go twice the distance on the same fuel then someone will probably double the price of the petrol," he speculated.

Alan Copps on the latest registration plate auctions

IF YOU have just spent £329,000 on a red Ferrari F50 then why not treat yourself to the perfect number plate? The registration F50 RED could be yours for about £8,000 — small change, really — at a forthcoming sale.

Or if you forgot Valentine's Day, you have the perfect chance to make amends on Monday. For £15,000 to £18,000 each you could buy the registration marks H 15 and HER 5. They each come with a Mini attached, but that might be just enough to smooth things over with an offended partner.

Auctions of registrations are becoming almost as frequent as those of cars, and in the next few weeks those on offer include some of the most sought-after numbers, although prices are unlikely to equal the £203,500 paid for the plate K 1 NGS at Christie's in 1993. It is said that on that occasion the representatives of two monarchs bid against each other up to 20 times the original estimate.

But among the previously unused numbers to be sold for the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency by Brooks at the Conference Forum in London on March 1 is one that might interest our own Sovereign — 1 ER — a comparative snip at an estimated £16,000-plus.

Although the sale has sev-

A number of ways to get yourself noticed

eral N-registration plates, including NI NJA, NI CKY, NIVEN and N1XON, most of them are numbers which could have been issued years ago when licensing was in the hands of local authorities, but for one reason or another were never used. The top lot, an estimate at least, is 1 Y at £18,000-plus, which might have been handed out in rural Somerset.

Byron Roberts, who leads the DVLA's "Sale of Marks" marketing team, says: "There are two types of registrations on sale. The affordable marks, which people can request through our telephone sales service, and those we choose to auction. These are a bit special."

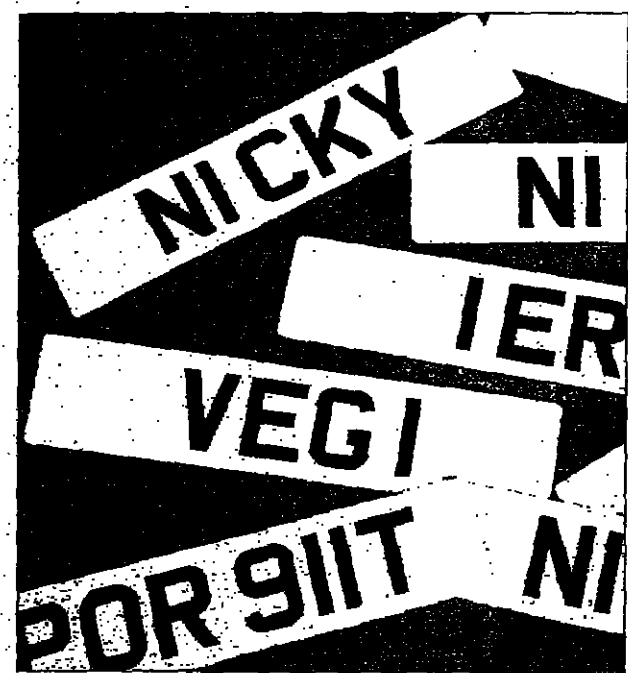
Mr Roberts is the great defender of these sales against the charge that cherished plates are simply an example of a Government agency dealing in trivia.

"Since 1989 we have sold more than 400,000 personalised plates and generated £195 million for the Exchequer. What we are doing is meeting a demand that was already there and was previously exploited by private companies. Now it benefits the taxpayer."

A sale at Christie's in December raised £12 million, and the Brooks sale, by coincidence for a Swansea-based institution being held on St David's Day, is expected to raise a similar sum. Another recent sale in Glasgow, which included the registration 1 OCH and CLANS, raised more than £2 million, the highest price being £40,000 paid for NI ALL after some fierce bidding.

One thing the DVLA has done to help such bidding along is to carry out research into what initials or groups of letters occur most frequently in various parts of the country. For example, anything ending in M is likely to sell in Scotland because of the preponderance of surnames starting with Mac, similarly anything ending in D or J is likely to sell in Wales, where the Davises like to keep up with the Joneses.

The Brooks sale includes several numbers appealing to owners of particular cars. Apart from the F50 for a Ferrari, there is 10 TUS for a Lotus, POR 911T for anyone



Well-lettered: there's even one that the Queen might like

who feels a Porsche Turbo needs further enhancement, NSX 1 for a Honda owner and 1 TR for a Triumph enthusiast.

But if you'd prefer a car, the twin Minis are in a Christie's sale at the Jack Barclay Showrooms in London SW8 that also includes a classic restoration project, the dismembered parts of the 1934 Aston Martin Ulster driven by Prince Bira-bongse Bhanubandh of Siam, the amateur racing driver who preferred to be known as

B. Bira. The Ulster is regarded as the height of Aston's pre-war racing development. And if you are looking for a way to mark the centenary of the British motor industry, then Brooks also has a sale at Olympia next Thursday that includes one of the oldest cars around: an 1894 two-seater Benz Velo L5hp. A veteran of many a London to Brighton run, it carries an estimate of £55,000-£60,000 and comes with the impressive number plate A 6.

DR DASHBOARD

Dangers of a bull market

Q How did bull bars, those metal frames on the front of 4WD vehicles, originate?

A They began as "roo bars" in Australia or "moose bars" in the US to protect vehicles travelling in remote areas in the event of collision with animals. It seems that kangaroos and moose lack any road sense and hitting one at speed can do a lot of damage to car and driver — as well as to the animal.

Q So are they useful here or just fashion accessories?

A Well, it's difficult to think of anywhere in Britain where the wildlife is big enough to merit such precautions. There might be some justification for using them off the road, but on the road they really are just decoration.

Q Surely if you are hit by a 4WD you're going to get hurt bars or not?

A That's true. But concern voiced by the Transport Research Laboratory centres mainly on children. The top bars are just about head height for a youngster and the fear is that the protruding bar will cause far more damage than the bonnet of a vehicle, which usually slopes back. Tests suggest that a child could be killed by a 12mph collision with a bar, while it could survive a 25mph collision otherwise.

Q But I thought I'd read about a dispute over that research?

A According to the RAC, the real annual death toll from accidents involving bars could be 70. The TRL report, due out next month, may suggest about half that figure. It seems the TRL's research was partly based on a survey of police forces and only 30 of the 50 asked to provide data responded.

Q What is the view of the people who make these things? Are they concerned?

A The Association of Protector Bar Manufacturers say they have seen the police reports and do not support the alarm. Only five pedestrian deaths could be directly blamed on the bars. Of the others, the speed and circumstances of the accident indicated that it would have been fatal whether the vehicle was fitted with bars or not.

Q I thought there were moves last year to get them banned?

A Right. Last year a number of MPs campaigned for a ban, backed by the RAC, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and even John Major expressed his concern. A Bill to ban them has been introduced in the House of Lords and on Wednesday a similar Ten-minute Rule Bill was put before the Commons by the Labour MP Paul Flynn. But such measures rarely become law.

Q If there is so much opposition to them, what is the problem?

A It appears that, however much concern there is here, we can't take action until the EC decides to introduce a ban. The European Parliament has voted for one, but that has yet to be turned into legislation.

Q But surely the manufacturers don't have to wait for a change in the law if there is so much concern?

A Right again. Some manufacturers, including Mitsubishi, Suzuki and Ford, have already introduced "deformable" bars made of softer material. These give on impact and cause far less damage.

Made in Britain, it became a benchmark of excellence. Hilton Holloway marks the passing of a Rover classic



Last exit from Solihull for what became a favoured hunting vehicle of sheiks, an Anglophile status symbol in America, all-purpose transport in the Shires, a lifestyle statement in prosperous suburbs — and made Margaret Thatcher do a U-turn

At precisely 11am on Thursday of this week, a select few people witnessed the death of a classic. Not any classic, but an icon of British design that changed the face of world motoring and still influences carmakers all over the globe.

The Range Rover Classic is finally making way at Land Rover's Solihull factory for the hugely popular Discovery and hi-tech new model Range Rover. Surely no other car has invented a market sector, become a status symbol and has still been regarded as unbeatable 26 years later?

The Range Rover was a peculiarly British success story. It was born out of the instincts of a small number of engineers and became as much a symbol of the British way of life as the faded country house and Barbour jacket. Even the formidable Margaret Thatcher was caught out by the country's love for it. The lady had to make an unscheduled U-turn when plans leaked out in 1986 that her

government wanted to sell state-owned Land Rover to General Motors.

Three men who created the legend were Rover engineers Gordon Bashford and Spen King and Rover stylist David Bache. However, the foresight of the Rover company bosses Maurice and Spencer Wilks was remarkable. They set out as far back as the early 1950s to create a luxurious, but versatile, version of its spartan Land Rover, primarily for road use. It was called the Road-Rover.

Wilks, Bashford, King and Bache struggled long and hard through the 1950s to try and perfect the style of the Road-Rover. According to Spen King: "It was a jolly nice vehicle. I had a Road-Rover, and in its early forms it was very good indeed." It came close to production, but in 1960

the whole project was abandoned.

Then, in the early 1960s, the company sent Graham Barnock, one of the Land Rover team, to America to conduct some formal market research. He returned convinced that the next big thing would be four-wheel drive vehicles for leisure use. "I've spoken to Graham about this," says King, "and it was a remarkable coincidence. He came up with the same conclusion we did — we needed to build a car like the Range Rover."

Finally, they had the right formula — a luxury Land Rover, using the chassis and four-wheel drive running gear. By 1966 the project had found its feet and, after experimenting with various transmissions, they settled on the famous long-travel suspension and permanent four-wheel



One to remember: an icon that changed world motoring

drive that would establish the car's long reign as off-road king.

Dubbed the 100-inch Station Wagon, the next stroke of genius was the timeless styling. This was not originally

the slick work of a stylist's pen, but a creation of Bashford and King. "Actually, I don't see the styling as being that important," says King. "It probably took up less than 2 per cent of our time." Their prototype was

then tweaked by Bache into the shape we know now; elegant, timeless and never equalled. The Range Rover finally went on sale in 1970.

It was launched in the rugged surroundings of the Blue Hills Mine at St Agnes, Cornwall and, in 1972, the British Trans-Americas expedition used it to cross the continent through the Darien Gap, the first vehicle to make the journey. Two years later it completed a 7,500-mile West to East crossing of the Sahara in 100 days, and in 1981 a Range Rover was outright winner of the Paris-Dakar rally. In the Middle East it became the favoured hunting vehicle of sheiks, in the US an Anglophile status symbol, in the Shires it was an all-purpose vehicle, in Britain's prosperous suburbs a lifestyle statement.

It is a testament to the rightness of the original design that it remained practically unaltered right into the 1990s, although subtle improvements were made.

Initially, the Range Rover did not make it on to the American market, for which it was originally intended, until March 1987. It also took 11 years for a four-door version to appear, and the spartan interior remained rather more "Land" than "Rover" for many years.

The Range Rover has been exhibited at the Louvre as an exemplar of modern industrial design and was widely praised for its export achievements; more than 60 per cent of production regularly went overseas. With typical reluctance, King will admit to the Range Rover being his great-

est achievement in a distinguished career, "although of course it was shared with others. It probably had the best effect on our balance of payments of anything I was involved in."

King was honoured by Land Rover in 1990 when it released a special edition "CSK" (Charles Spencer King) version. He is still very much occupied with engineering through his own company, Spen King Associates. When asked what he thinks of the all-new Range Rover, particularly that car's controversial appearance, he is unexpectedly positive: "My wife and I were out one when we were on holiday in the States, where it stood out as a distinctive and likeable vehicle." But he will concede that the new Range Rover "looks a little too like Japanese rivals, and it will not last as long as the original."

And is King sad to see the end of the Range Rover? "Well, I'm a bit sad, but I'm not weeping." He is, he says, far more interested in the future than the past.



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